

**Minutes, Meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission
April 15, 2015**

2015	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
M. Herzberg, Chair	P	P	A	A						
D. Rasmussen, Liaison	P	P	A	P						
A. Dohl	M	M	P	P						
J. Schaffer	P	P	A	P						
B. Weeks	P	A	M	M						
B. Strom	A	A	R							
Jennifer Maier, Planning Bd. Liaison	P	P	P	P						
S. Burke	A	R								
A. Dutemple				P						

Key: P=Present, A=Absent, R=Resigned; M=Minutes Assigned/Taken.

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

A guest attended. Liam Weeks, a resident of Metuchen and a student at the High School, is a Boy Scout working on the Eagle rank and wanted to discuss a proposed tree-planting project in Oakland Avenue Park. He would plant trees between the tennis courts and the parking lot that is adjacent to the railroad. Discussion of options for planting the trees and creating a natural delineation between the lawn area and parking lot.

Alyson Dutemple, a new member of the Environmental Commission, attended her first meeting this evening. Dorothy continues to actively recruit another new member. Due to the resignations in February of Sharon Burke and in March of Beth Strom, the Environmental Commission has been seeking two new members. Nominations or volunteers from interested adult residents are welcome.

Minutes of March meeting

Approved.

Correspondence

Letter from resident of Weston Street complaining about litter and messy dog walkers near the trail through her neighborhood. The Opalanie Trail is on Borough property, and runs along the edge of a wetland and along an old railroad embankment through the Dismal Swamp. During trail clearing, Boy Scouts removed large amounts of dead vegetation and garbage behind residential properties. Borough Administrator Jennifer Maier and DPW Director Fred Hall inspected the area. Discussion of DPW plan to place sign reminding trail users of Borough ordinances prohibiting littering with any type of waste.

Copy of notice received from Menlo Engineering Associates on behalf of the Borough, advising of a Borough application to the NJDEP for a Treatment Works Approval to connect the new development at The District with the Borough's sanitary sewer line. Discussion of whether the existing sewer lines and pumping stations have sufficient capacity to properly handle the increased waste flow.

Earth Day

The Borough held its annual Earth Day event this year on Saturday April 11 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Senior Center, in conjunction with the Shade Tree Commission and Garden Club. The first activity was giving away small trees for residents to plant on their property. The Borough has more small trees for residents who want to plant them. Species include willow oak, northern red oak and dogwood.

For the second activity, the Borough Administrator arranged for a student from Rutgers Agricultural Extension Service to present a workshop on the proper cutting and mulching of lawn grass. The presenter explained how leaving the grass clippings on the ground will enrich the soil and reduce the need for fertilizer and water. Dorothy spoke highly of the performance of her rechargeable electric mulching mower.

Arbor Day

No update. At last month's meeting, we heard that on Friday, April 24, a group of Girl Scouts plans to plant trees in front of Edgar School.

Middlesex Greenway

1. Discussion of possible improvements to local trails. By April 30, Jennifer will apply for a grant for federal trail funding to implement a measure such as installing a security camera on Borough property with a view of the Middlesex Greenway.
2. Jennifer will apply to ANJEC for a grant of up to \$1,500 to hire either the Borough planner or Rutgers summer interns to help implement some of the initiatives identified in the Together North Jersey report.

Dismal Swamp

1. No update from the County on its planned acquisitions of land in the Dismal Swamp in Metuchen, Edison and South Plainfield.
2. No update from the County on our request for a meeting with its planning department.

Recycling

1. Starting in 2016, the Borough will no longer pick up grass clippings. If residents mulch or compost their lawn clippings, the Borough estimates this will save about \$25,000 per year. (The costs of picking them up and paying to landfill them.) Discussion of methods to communicate this change to residents, including automated calls such as a "reverse 911."
2. Discussion of educating residents on which materials are recyclable, and selection of a vendor to sort and recycle the materials. A particular concern is plastic garbage bags. They are not among the materials accepted in our single stream recycling, and they can damage the equipment used to separate recyclable materials.

Sustainable Jersey

1. The first Green Team meeting will be on Tuesday April 21 at 7 p.m. in Borough Hall. Discussion of membership and possible agenda items.
2. Discussion of Borough sustainability initiatives outlined in transportation grant application prepared by Borough Administrator Jennifer Maier. Jennifer continues to investigate and apply for sustainability grants for the Borough.
3. The Borough is investigating possible reuse of the former Oakite and Gulton brownfield sites.
4. On June 13, Campbell School will host its annual "bike rodeo" for elementary school students.

Tree Farm

As discussed above, our guest Boy Scout Liam Weeks has volunteered to plant trees behind the tennis courts on Oakland Avenue by Grove Avenue, using some of the small trees left over from Earth Day 2014 and 2015 that Dorothy has been watering and tending at her home. Discussion of whether DPW can repair the water fountain near the tennis courts so the trees may be watered regularly, especially during hot and dry weather. Liam will plant the trees in the grass area between the tennis

courts and the parking lot along the railroad. He also will locate a natural material, such as logs from fallen trees, to use to separate the parking lot from the lawn and trees. DPW will ensure that a source of water is available for the trees.

Open space inventory

No news.

Planning Board

No news.

New business

None.

Next meeting

Wednesday May 20th at 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Brian Weeks