

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
Environmental Commission
Minutes of the May 15, 2013 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall. Present: Mark Herzberg, Chair, Dorothy Rasmussen, Council Liaison, Angela Dohl, Dan Hirsch, Tom Rudel, and Brian Weeks. Absent: Joe Schaffer and Beth Strom.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM. The minutes of the April 2013 meeting were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

- We received an advertisement for "Explore Metuchen" event at the Old Franklin School this weekend (May 18 & 19). Environmental Commission members will staff a table providing information to the public about the proposed Middlesex Greenway extension and the Borough's single-stream recycling program.
- The May 8 edition of the DEP Bulletin was received but it did not contain any items of relevance to Metuchen.
 - Notice was received from Middlesex County of its application for a statewide Flood Hazard Area general permit to replace a culvert under Orchard Street on a tributary to Mill Brook. A well-managed project can reduce any environmental impact from this welcome infrastructure improvement.
- We received information from ANJEC about Environmental Resource Inventories.
- We received a copy of a letter sent by the Borough and the Environmental Commission to Edison Wetlands Association clarifying the terms of a grant by EWA to the Borough to perform a Supplemental Environmental project in the Metuchen area of the Dismal Swamp.

OLD BUSINESS

Dismal Swamp: Discussion of the letter sent by the Borough and the Environmental Commission to Edison Wetlands Association clarifying the terms of a grant by EWA to the Borough to perform a Supplemental Environmental project in the Metuchen area of the Dismal Swamp. Detailed terms are not yet finalized. Commission members are eager to finalize the grant and begin the SEP.

Discussion of a Borough resolution asking the County to leave certain parcels on the Gulton tract in its mapped sewer service area. Mark spoke with the Borough planner and expressed Commission members' concerns with redeveloping the site within the constraints of potential flooding, wetlands and site remediation. The Borough passed the resolution.

Discussion of an Eagle Scout project proposed by Nikolai Krebs of Troop 17 to develop a walking trail in the Dismal Swamp. It would run from the Greenway extension behind the recycling center along the Dismal Brook to the Borough's Camp Kilmer railroad

embankment, on which it would continue through a "paper street" to Durham Avenue. Dan will forward the PowerPoint to the Borough planner for discussion with the owner of the Gulton tract.

Discussion of outreach to County Mosquito Commission about meeting to discuss improving drainage in the Swamp and along the Greenway extension.

Discussion of the possibility of a wetland mitigation project in the Borough's section of the Dismal Swamp. Such a project would create and/or improve wetlands, and some State funds may be available for qualifying projects.

Greenway: Discussion of the Metuchen-Edison YMCA awards dinner on May 8. Commission members Dorothy, Mark and Angela attended and spoke with political attendees about the Greenway extension. Awards presented to long-term Greenway advocates Walt Stochel, John Wiley and Bob Takash, and to the Borough of Metuchen. Mark spoke with Congressman Pallone about the federal role in discussions with Conrail about using its right-of-way. Reportedly a Middlesex County freeholder and other prominent citizens expressed strong support for extending the Greenway both east to the Perth Amboy waterfront and west into the Dismal Swamp and toward South Plainfield.

Recycling: Discussion of how the Borough's single-stream recycling program has reduced the labor needed to pick up both garbage and recycling materials, but has not improved the recycling rate.

Energy - Global Warming: No activity.

Planning Board: At a public meeting on May 16 at 7:30 p.m. the Planning Board will present the plans for the new parking garage on New Street. The County will provide a \$1,095,000 grant of Open Space funds for a vest-pocket park on the southwest corner of Pearl and New Streets, on a corner of the current lot. A question arose as to whether the developer was to have provided this public amenity as a condition of its approval to develop this project. The State also has provided \$750,000 in "Transit Village" funding for this redevelopment project.

A redevelopment realtor, Fox and Foxx, will demolish an existing home and build two new homes at 177 Center Street.

Sustainable New Jersey: Dorothy attended a seminar on May 14 At Bloomfield College on integrating the arts into community development efforts. Discussion of involving the Borough Arts Council in the Green Team.

Discussion of meeting with Borough officials to identify measures to resume application for Sustainable New Jersey certification. This may involve, for example, identifying the measures, such as those identified in the energy audits of municipal buildings, that the Borough is interested in implementing.

NEW BUSINESS

Members Mark and Brian planted five evergreen tree seedlings in clearings between the trees around the western perimeter of Myrtle field.

Discussion of deep erosion that has deepened since our last inspection and seems to present a safety hazard adjacent to the pedestrian bridge over Mill Brook between Charles and Myrtle fields.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. The next meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission will take place on June 19, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Weeks

AGENDA

Metuchen Environmental Commission

June 2013

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Correspondence

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Greenway

Dismal Swamp

Open Space

Recycling

Energy - Global Warming

Sustainable New Jersey

New Business