

Minutes of the Metuchen Environment Commission, January 20, 2010

Present: Kathy Busch, Steve Toth, Marc Herzberg , Tom Rudel, Ann Sardone, Will Waldron, Brian Weeks.

Absent: Patricia Donahue, Arlene Zatz, Mike Vissichelli.

Visitors: Jim Constantine, Mike DiGeronimo

Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

Reorganization of the committee: Marc Herzberg and Brian Weeks were reappointed to the commission for three year terms. Marc Herzberg was elected by acclamation to serve another year as chair of the commission.

Correspondence: ANJEC is running energy webinars and a full day session on energy conservation. ANJEC community outreach efforts (in Summit and Hopewell) were also described. Discussion ensued about a possible energy fair in the spring in Metuchen. We would want to recruit people from Metuchen who have done some innovative, energy saving things. The energy fair could be held on Earth Day along with other more traditional earth day activities. There was also a notice of the 2010 Smart Growth Planning Grants. Ideas for possible planning grants were discussed. Inter-municipal or regional plans for the Dismal Swamp would be an example of one of these types of projects.

Will Waldron discussed the results from the energy audits. The final draft of the audits of the four municipal buildings was recently made available. New furnaces for the DPW garage were made a high priority. Discussion ensued about the return on the new investments in energy technologies. How to implement the changes became the focus of the discussion. Additional issues to discuss in a future meeting with the auditors were enumerated.

The issue of Sustainable New Jersey was raised and whether or not it would be priority in the coming year. The construction part of the Greenway went out to bid from the county in the past few weeks.

The planners (Jim Constantine and Rick DiGeronimo) made a presentation. The 37 survey responses gathered at the country fair and elsewhere were reviewed. People wanted a soft paving on the Greenway extension trail. Daylighting and restoration of native plants were popular. Wildflower gardens and community gardens were also popular. People seem to be largely unaware of the Dismal swamp, so signage would be an important issue. Jim presented the concept plan for the trailhead park.

The circulation plan for Metuchen was just approved. One issue had to do with the circulation in and around the trailhead park. Jim described an extension of Amboy Avenue through to the trailhead area and Middlesex Avenue and continuing to the northwest across Durham, and eventually to the industrial park in the northwest portion of the town. The northern section of this road would only be open to truck traffic for five days a week. Other borough commissions (Traffic and Transportation, Planning Commission) have an interest in the plan. According to Jim, the plan provides some 'balance' , i.e. it meets various needs of the community.

The meeting continued until past 9:30PM at which point the scribe had to leave!

Tom Rudel