

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
Environmental Commission
Minutes of the July 21, 2010 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, July 21, 2010 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

Present were: Will Waldron, Council Liaison, Mark Herzberg, Chair, Kathy Busch, Planning Board Liaison, Tom Rudel, Brian Weeks and Pat Donahue.

Absent were: Arline Zatz, Ann Sardone, Mike Vissichelli and Steve Toth.

Guest: Karina Wilkinson from Food and Water Watch

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes of the May and June meetings were approved and accepted.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **Flyer regarding National Night Out schedule for August 5**
- **Letter regarding an application for fresh water wetlands general permit for work on Route 27 over the Greenway**
- **NJDEP Bulletins for 6/23 and 7/7 with nothing of pertinence to Metuchen**

OLD BUSINESS

Thomas Pond Park – no report

Planning Board – no report

Dismal Swamp – no report

Greenway

The engineers for this project stated that the RFP would be out in July. The plan regarding the access points and “Trailhead Park” are still being reviewed.

Dog Park – no report

Recycling – no report

Edgar School and Pool Parking Lot

Neighbors near Hampton Park where Amtrak deforested the area adjacent to the tracks have complained about the lack of trees. There was discussion regarding the feasibility of moving trees from the island in front of the pool to Hampton Park with general consensus that unless done expertly and unless provided with adequate care, the transplants would likely not survive.

Open Space – no report

Global Warming – no report

Energy Audit

Mark reported that some Commission members met with two of the vendors. We are most interested in their no cash down options and a power purchase agreement. Under

these plans, the Borough would receive a 10%-30% discount on purchases of the electricity from the solar panels. One of the vendors like the Metuchen High School's potential for a solar installation. This would require cooperation by the Board of Education. There was some discussion regarding adding the fire house and the EMS building to the list of potential sites for solar installations. We are currently spending about \$150,000 per year for electricity for four buildings. Even a small benefit from solar would reduce these charges by \$15,000 - \$25,000.

The federal 30% tax credit expires at the end of the year so there is some urgency to moving forward. Commission members should meet with the Mayor, the Borough Administrator, as well as Council members from each party to advise them of what we have learned thus far.

There was also agreement that the county office on sustainability should be contacted for information on grants for energy efficiency projects. If available, these monies could be used toward the new boiler for DPW.

NEW BUSINESS

- Karina Wilkinson is working with Clean Ocean Action to organize opposition to Exxon's "Blue Ocean Energy" proposal, which might include the installation of a 36" gas pipeline at a depth of only 3' through some portion of Metuchen. Perth Amboy has already passed a resolution opposing a similar project by "Liberty." These proposals are part of a larger plan to develop offshore ports in the NY-NJ bight for liquefied natural gas imports.

Members had several questions. What will the gas be used for? Can the pipelines and port facilities be used to export, as well as import, gas? What is the liability if there is an accident? Is the proposal related to the construction of a power plant in Bayonne? Pending receipt of answers to these questions, the Commission will consider language for a possible resolution.

- We have been contacted by Operation Porchlight. They would like us to take a large quantity of lightbulbs for distribution. Mark will be in touch with them to determine the details and whether or not this could be done at our booth during the fall street fair.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission will take place on September 15, 2010 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

**Patricia Donahue,
Acting Secretary**

AGENDA

Metuchen Environmental Commission

September 15, 2010

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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Planning Board

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