

Minutes of the Metuchen Environmental Commission, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Present: M. Herzberg, P. Donahue, K. Busch, T. Rudel, W. Waldron, S. Toth

Absent: A. Zatz, B. Weeks, M. Vissichelli, A. Sardone

Visitor: S. Berns, Dometech representative

The meeting began at 7:00PM.

The minutes from the previous meeting (April) were reviewed and approved.

Correspondence from the previous month was reviewed, with special note being taken of the notices from Edison about the installation of solar power facilities in several places in the township.

The discussion turned to the Energy Fair held on April 24<sup>th</sup> in the Senior Center. Four commissioners attended; the overall attendance was good but not great. The discussion of the presentations at the Fair turned to a description by S. Berns of the different programs run by the state of New Jersey to enhance energy efficiency in the state. Knowledge about these programs is important because the borough is moving to replace a Department of Public Works furnace and may be eligible for rebates or subsidies through these programs. The PSEG program for the installation of improved heating systems has run out of money for this year. The commissioners and Ms. Berns reviewed the borough's eligibility for the various state programs. The Direct Install program seemed to be potentially very useful as is the Pay for Performance program. A discussion of the energy audit led to a conclusion that the big energy savings are going to be in operations and maintenance.

The long awaited Greenway refurbishing is moving along with the County slated to put the work out to bid in July of this year. The next steps on the Greenway extension plan were reviewed. The .pdf of the plan will be provided and the commissioners' suggestions for revisions will be solicited. Then the plan will be sent to the borough council for approval. Then we will send the approved plan to the county and try to get them to allocate funds for the implementation of the plan.

A brief conversation ensued about a butterfly garden near Edgar School. This was followed by an animated discussion of the borough's policy of picking up grass cuttings. DPW wants to consolidate trash pick-ups with grass cutting pick-ups to save on labor costs. This is the same logic that led to the borough to invest in one person garbage trucks, saving on labor costs in order to spend on larger trash pick-ups. In the earlier example the recycling rates dropped, so there was more trash to be picked up. Several people argued that the town should just stop picking up grass cuttings. Apparently other communities no longer pick it up. Allegedly, lawn companies are sometimes leaving their grass cuttings from other towns to be picked up by DPW.

A discussion ensued about the idea of putting more bales of barley in the pond to hold down the algae blooms this summer. Should we do it?

The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM

Scribe: Tom Rudel

