

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
Environmental Commission
Minutes of the March 20th, 2013 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, March 20th 2013 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall. Present were: Mark Herzberg, Chair, Angela Dohl, Tom Rudel (late), Beth Strom, Brian Weeks, Joe Schaffer, and Dorothy Rasmussen. Absent: Dan Hirsch

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

The minutes of the February 2013 meeting were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mark received two issues of the DEP Bulletin 2/20/13, 03/06/13. There are several permit renewal processes under way, involving the Wm Corp and Conrail.

OLD BUSINESS

Earth Day work is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 13th, behind the Edgar School in the Edgar Woods. Beth Strom will advise if there are changes in plans. The Shade Tree Commission is talking about joining us to do the work. The recreation commission will prepare the publicity. Kick off will be at the Senior center about 9:00AM and work until 12:00PM. What kind of pre-work would we want DPW to do. Beth will consult with Judy Graziano about the work agenda for the morning of Earth Day. The Americorp volunteer Elise is organizing the Edgar school students to participate. (A change of venue occurred with a clean-up of the Greenway subsequently approved for the same date.)

Dismal Swamp

Dorothy Rasmussen spoke with Jim Constantine about the status of the lands including the Gulton property at the upstream portions of the swamp. A question came up in the discussion about whether or not building removal would be part of this work.

Dorothy wondered whether it would be possible to get the schools that teach surveying to survey the swamp ('metes and bounds'). We could inquire with the idea of getting this work done next fall. Using tax maps or a GIS, we could outline the boundaries of the swamp. All three towns would have to agree on these boundaries. What kind of boundaries would be used to do the work? Property lines of tracts in the area on cadastral maps and the hydrology of the area would have to be consulted. Discussion ensued about what happens if a developer challenges the designation of an area as a wetlands? These data layers on the maps and the hydrology itself may have changed with storm events.

The commission, led by Brian Weeks, received a grant from Bob Spiegel to do work related to the mapping of the swamp. The focus of the work would be on the development of a trail system in the swamp. This work could involve a feasibility study of extending the greenway to the swamp. Mr. Spiegel does not want work to go forward in polluted areas. Mosquito control became an issue. It appears that the focus of the grant has been broadened. There is potentially a means – end problem here. Mapping would appear to be a high priority activity. One task would be to bring the maps into alignment with one another. We need to figure out what some of the language in the award letter means. We need to have meeting to decide what to do. Thursday evening, 7:00PM.

The discussion shifted to who can do what and the amounts of the work that can be done on a pro bono basis. One important initial task would be to bring together the different map resources.

The next Dismal Swamp Commission meeting will be on April 17th in Metuchen.

Myrtle –

Foxx and Foxx are planting trees in the boundary area between the soccer fields and the cemetery. This measure is designed to reduce the conflict between the adjacent uses.

Pedestrian safety.

People like the flags that have been set up to promote pedestrian safety, one at St. Lukes & Rte. 27 and the other at Main Street & Lincoln Avenue. Police want to know about violations of the law among drivers and among pedestrians. The meeting about pedestrian safety with the police and town residents was a useful first event. This promises to be a continuing issue.

Bike Walk - Metuchen is collecting data on pedestrian issues, bicycles, and cars, and they are interfacing with the police about traffic issues.

NEW BUSINESS

Another Dismal Swamp stream clearing is scheduled for April 6th. Meet at 9:00AM at Tom's Automotive.

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 April 17, 2013 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

Scribe

Tom Rudel