

Minutes for the Environmental Commission

March 8, 2012

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:29 PM.

In attendance: Baldino, Hall, Neufeld, Piel, Slowick, Smith-Casey, Urbanski, Van der Veen, Zuzov

Excused Absence: Rich (TC liaison)

The minutes of the February 9, 2012 meeting were reviewed and approved.

A member of the public was present for the meeting. The person identified herself as Allison Kohler, the Watershed Ambassador for West Amwell, Watershed Management Area #11. She participated in the meeting.

Business

1. Sustainable Jersey

Chairperson Urbanski read a letter from sustainable Jersey congratulating West Amwell for achieving Sustainable Jersey certification.

2. 319h grant for the Alexauken

Chairperson Urbanski reviewed a letter with the Commission from Paul Cooper of Princeton Hydro letting the Commission know that the grant was awarded before a project plan was in place. The letter was to let the Commission know that the plan was in progress.

Commission member Piel indicated to the Commission that someone from the EC should be working with Princeton Hydro on the plan.

3. Invasive Species/Native Alternatives Binder

Chairperson Urbanski reported the Commission that the binder that the EC assembled for the township municipal building lobby is being read extensively.

The chairperson also reported that another copy of the binder is being printed at the expense of an anonymous donor so it could be used in the elementary school Arbor Day celebrations.

The Commission also discussed where else to distribute copies of the binders. This included local landscape contractors as well as garden centers. In some cases, a CD copy only of the binder will be distributed.

4. Website

The Commission reviewed formats for the Commission website.

The website would retain the current quick links, with changes.

The Commission also reviewed old newsletters in order to determine if any of those materials were current and still relevant. The Commission decided that a number of articles including an article on the Alexauken Creek, an article on flying squirrels, an article on Coyotes, and an article on natural alternatives to household products were still relevant and should be put on the website. Other articles were discussed for inclusion on the website.

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There was also discussion of including information on green living, Sustainable Jersey certification, and storm water management.

5. S1085

Chairperson Urbanski reported that the township committee passed the forestry bill resolution put forth by the Commission and a letter was sent to every state legislator. The Commission received only one reply to the letter.

6. Contact with NJPO regarding interpretation of MLUL 40-55D-27

The Chairperson reported that she had spoken to the executive director of the New Jersey Planning Officials regarding how MLUL 40-55D-27 can be interpreted with regards to the responsibilities of the planning and zoning boards to Environmental Commission. The director admitted that there was misleading and conflicting text. The Commission feels that the language requires clarification to ensure that the boards take appropriate steps to ensure that the Commission is aware of any application that have been received.

The director committed to revising the law, if possible, and thanked the EC for bringing it to his attention.

7. The Watershed Ambassador Program

Allison Kohler, the Watershed Ambassador to West Amwell, described her role and wanted to discuss with the Commission what she could do to help.

She briefly described some work she is involved in monitoring pollution in the Alexauken Creek.

The Commission briefly discussed its outreach and education efforts with the ambassador. A discussion of the Commission's efforts at the previous year's town fair followed. Allison agreed to write something on stormwater for the website and will do a presentation at the West Amwell Country Fair in May.

8. NRI Update, due to be done in 2012

The Commission discussed that the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) would need to be updated.

The Commission postponed the discussion of the update of the NRI until the next meeting.

9. Threatened and Endangered Species

The Commission noted that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection updated the list of Threatened and Endangers species. The Commission noted that the Coopers Hawk was transferred to the Threatened list from Endangered. Coopers' Hawks are in West Amwell.

10. EC handbook

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Copies of the EC handbook were distributed to Commission members Neufeld and Slowick.

Commission member Slowick agreed to look into scanning a copy of the handbook in order facilitate easier distribution of the handbook.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.