

**West Amwell Township
Environmental Commission
September 9, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chairperson Cathy Urbanski.

In attendance: Charity Hall, Jeff Slowick, Rob Piel, Rob Tomenchok, Cathy Urbanski, Joan Van der Veen.

Absent: Joel Coyne, George Fisher (TC liaison), Robin Myhre

Approval of minutes

There was minor edit to the minutes of the August 12, 2010. Chairperson Urbanski will make the changes and submit them to the township clerk.

Opportunity for public comment

There were no members of the public present for comment.

Old Business

1. Green Team/Sustainable Jersey Certification

Green assignments were reviewed. Chairperson Urbanski worked on the farmland preservation element of the certification. The municipal agricultural advisory committee has been working on the farmland preservation plan. The plan has yet to be approved but once it is, it can be included with the certification

Chairperson Urbanski reported back from the Township Committee meeting in which the establishing of an Environmental Commission site in Facebook was discussed. The Committee placed the project on hold citing concerns regarding control of the site.

Mr. Tomenchok did touch base with the school and with Scout troop 49 regarding helping the Commission with the Certification.

2. Website Design

A committee has been formed to work on the new web site. Chairperson Urbanski suggested to the township committee that an Eagle Scout help. Mr. Tomenchok suggested that an Eagle Scout could help do the heavy lifting to set up the site with significant guidance from the town committee.

3. 4-H Fair

The East Amwell EC booth at this years 4-H Fair was discussed. The Commission discussed what could be done for next years' fair. The Commission also discussed making it a joint effort with the East Amwell Environmental Commission. The Commission will contact East Amwell in January of next year to discuss a joint booth at next years fair.

4. Invasive Species

The Commission discussed putting together a list of invasive species and how to get the word out to the people of the township what species to need to be eradicated. The Commission agreed to discuss putting that list together at the October meeting. Each member is to bring two candidates for the list to the next meeting.

5. Report on Zoning Board meeting concerning the SCO

Chairperson Urbanski reported on her meeting with the Zoning Board regarding the Stream Corridor Ordinance (SCO). After some discussion, the board stated that they were satisfied with the ordinance.

However, one concern was raised regarding the wording of the ordinance hardship allowances which might be in conflict with the hardship allowances listed in the MLUL. Chairperson Urbanski contacted NJPO and the executive director felt that there could be a conflict that could open the town to liability.

Mr. Piel confirmed that the ordinance was originally written to comply with the MLUL. The township ordinance was based on a model ordinance that was provided at the time the MLUL was put in place. However, the MLUL seems to have been revised.

There have been a few cases in which a hardship variance was allowed by the zoning board. One was a case where the lot was subdivided before the current SCO came into effect. Another was for a case where the property butted up against a stream and the property owner wanted to place a shed against the back of the property. In both cases, allowances were made.

New Business

1. Possible amendment to SCO (hardship)

The discussion of the SCO continued into a discussion of the MLUL and the amount of freedom it allows a township to make its own ordinance. In addition it was discussed if this was an issue of clarification or if it was an issue of changing the restrictions.

The Commission discussed revised wording for the ordinance. The revised wording would default to the MLUL. The commission recognized that the current MLUL hardship variances are different from the current town ordinances.

The commission agreed to table the discussion in order to consult with the township committee and the township attorney. Mr. Piel would also try to determine the origin of the language in the current ordinance and determine what impact the revised wording would have on the township's current wastewater management plan.

Opportunity for public comment

There were no members of the public present for comment.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jeff Slowick.