

Minutes for the Environmental Commission September 11, 2014

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:31 pm.

Members present – Clapp, Hall, Haug, Neufeld, Piel, Urbanski, Van der Veen, Zuzov, TC liaison Dale.

Members absent – Longhi.

Minutes of July 10, 2014 were approved.

Opportunity for Public Comment– no members of the public were present.

Woodlands Ordinance – Cathy stated that the ordinance was adopted at the last Township Committee meeting, but a comment made at the public hearing made sense and she studied the chart which listed the percentage of woodlands which could be removed and subsequently met with Rob Tomenchok and John Dale. There was a considerable difference in the percentage of woodlands removal permitted in the chart and in the maximum lot coverage for the zones, “whichever is greater” (10% vs. 20% for the SRPD for example). The decision at that meeting was to allow removal of up to 50,000 sq.ft. for all residential districts. It was also decided to remove commercial properties from the ordinance since those properties were either already built out, not wooded or already preserved. The Commission members discussed this and concluded that the changes to the ordinance were appropriate.

319h grant –

Members reviewed Princeton Hydro’s new plan for a raingarden and bioretention system on the municipal property. Several concerns were raised by Dave about the design. It was decided to ask Dr. Steve Souza to attend our next meeting to explain the plan and address our concerns.

It was noted that invasives in the rain garden at South were removed by Princeton Hydro.

Members reviewed and discussed the letter sent to the DEP regarding the denial of funding of the newsletter and the denial of the Alexauken Creek project with South Hunterdon Regional High School.

Many thanks to Rob for his help with this.

Members also discussed the fact that the DEP still has not responded to emails or phone messages concerning the decommissioning of the dam at the Alexauken Creek Wildlife Management area. It was suggested that a letter/phone call might be appropriate. Cathy will follow up.

Sustainable Jersey Conservation Easement Grant - Cathy presented to the Commission the final document which was presented to the Township Committee and the Open Space committee. All of the easements in the township have been documented and mapped. Music Mtn. has been inspected, along with other easements in the township. It was noted that there were no easement violations. Some of the easements were not inspected, due to time constraints and it was recommended that a

professional perform this task this in the future. It was not possible with 2 volunteers to successfully accomplish the easement inspections in the given time frame.

NRI Update - Cathy and Joan will work on this in October. We need to amend the NRI to reflect the changes in the Woodlands Ordinance.

Penn East Natural Gas Pipeline – Members very seriously discussed this, at length. Concerns were for possible damage to wells, the pipeline through preserved land (on 9/12 the SADC will be considering amending the easement language for preserved farms), the residents impacted and the questionable need for another pipeline in NJ. There would be no benefit to West Amwell, only disruption to the environment and residents. Members plan to attend the informational meeting in Lambertville on Sept. 15, hosted by the Sierra Club and the Delaware Riverkeeper.

Open to members for further discussion. No discussion.

Opportunity for public comment – No members of the public were present.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes prepared by C. Urbanski.