

Minutes of the Environmental Commission March 12, 2015

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

Members Present – Clapp, Hall, Haug, Neufeld, Urbanski,
Van der Veen, Dale (TC liaison).

Members Excused – Piel, Zuzov.

Members Absent – Longhi.

Approval of minutes – January 8, 2015, approved.

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

Business:

Meeting room and recording of meeting: Cathy expressed the need to meet in the back conference room since the Commission meetings in the main meeting room always follows Court. The room subsequently always needs major moving of tables and rearranging. Meeting in the conference room would eliminate that problem.

Also, the EC discussed discontinuing the recording of our meetings. Cathy, who acts as Secretary, never listens to the recordings. The members agreed that we do not need to be redundant, since the minutes are sufficient and are an excellent record of our meetings. The Commission reviewed the State statute which created the Environmental Commission and which is in the code of West Amwell which states that the Commission should keep a record of their meetings and provide an annual report to the township committee. The members made changes to our bylaws in order to eliminate the need to have a “verbatim record” of our meeting. We will seek township committee approval to amend the bylaws.

319h Grant: Cathy had met with Steve Souza to discuss the members’ modification of the plan for the municipal property, along with his proposed modified design

which incorporated some of our suggestions. Since the members did not have sufficient time to review the comments and modifications, we decided to review at the April meeting and request that Mr. Souza be present.

The project for the Alexauken Creek Wildlife Management area is stalled. The project managers, Nick Zripko and Dave McPartland have been reassigned. The current manager is requiring an archeological survey of the dam. Princeton Hydro has made the arrangements for the survey.

Woodlands Ordinance mitigation: JCP&L planting of approximately 2000 trees to mitigate those removed during their substation upgrade: we had been asked by the Clerk to discuss. Plantings on the municipal property were suggested, but maintenance was a question and a probable problem for the DPW. Parks and Rec were suggesting plantings in Hewitt Park. The Commission decided that Hewitt Park would be a very suitable place for the new trees/shrubs.

JCP&L ROW permit maintenance application: Members reviewed the lengthy application for the maintenance of the transmission lines. This was not only for West Amwell, but included all counties and municipalities which JCP&L serves. Of particular interest was the section on the Natural Heritage Program Database Information.

Members also reviewed the permit application for the replacement of the Swan Creek foot bridge crossing the D&R canal in Lambertville.

PennEast proposed pipeline: discussion of scoping sessions, scoping comments, general comments to FERC. The opposition is intense and FERC is aware of this.

Styrofoam: South Hunterdon Elementary teacher, Justin Holohan, had requested input from the Commission on the dangers of styrofoam, as the schoolchildren are served their lunch on it. Cathy had sent him some information on the possible health hazards. The members discussed this and decided that our only comment would be the negative effects on the environment. Styrofoam cannot be recycled, does not biodegrade, and adds to the trash disposal problem. The members will write a letter on the environmental impacts if Mr. Holohan requests it.

Protocol for Commission Review of Planning Board Applications: Since the Commission's comments on applications are due 10 days before the Planning Board

meeting, there has always been a problem with timely submissions of our comments. The Planning Board meeting is five days after the Environmental Commission meeting. The members discussed the formation of a sub-committee to review the applications, changing our meeting time, or having a special meeting. Art reported that the chairman of the Planning Board wants to make changes to the checklist in order to accommodate everyone. Also, our comments should be sent to the applicant as well. The members decided to follow the recommendations of the Planning Board.

Meeting time: Decision to continue to meet at 7 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes prepared by C. Urbanski