



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Minutes
May 18, 2017

Opening

NJ Open Public Meetings Act

Members Present

Gary Szalc, Eric Gaulin, Sandy Redder, Margaret Chowdhury, Phyllis Sandrock, Carol Walczuk, Victoria Gal, Teresa Keeler (Planning Board Liaison), Kathy Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison).

Members Absent

Dave Schwartzberg

Approval of Previous Minutes

Previous minutes were approved without comment.

Nature Center Report

1. Caretaker Report

- a. Clean Community Day – April 22, 2017 – three or four bags of trash removed from the stream and other areas including along Terrill Road
- b. Goats – fence repair will occur the following Monday, followed by Tuesday arrival of the goats. Water situation still to be resolved. Likely can use Dean Talcott's neighbor's water if Dean is not wanting to provide. Can also try to get a poly tank mobilized to provide water.
- c. Vandalism repairs
 - i. Phyllis is working on the peace pole repairs
 - ii. Phyllis will coordinate with the Fanwood DPW to repair the bird blind
- d. Security discussion
 - i. Police says new signs are needed at bible chapel two need signs
 - ii. Other signs are worn
 - iii. Commission discussed trail cameras to observe when other incidents occur in the Nature Center. Eric noted that Fanwood Police Chief Trigo indicated that these have limited use in prosecution and there are concerns about privacy issues.
 - iv. Commission discussed possibility of placing signage indicating the area was protected by video surveillance.

2. Other Items

- a. Girl Scout Gold Star Project – Julia Guarneri – no news
 - b. Justin Chaillet Eagle Scout project – should reevaluate, since the grant from ANJEC was turned down.
 - c. Bird house project – two students from Terrill Middle school Andrew Abrantes and Chris Compierchio built several bluebird houses as part of their 7th grade service learning project, which will be installed in the Nature Center on 5/19/2017.
 - d. On 5/20/17 – Volunteers from All Saints Episcopal Church in Scotch Plains will be onsite to spread wood chips on the hiking paths in the Nature Center
 - e. On 5/21/17 – Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 33 in Fanwood and their families will be onsite to spread wood chips on the hiking paths in the Nature Center
3. Commission members to discuss previous distributed map and email from Emile DeVito – No specific discussion on this topic.
 4. Keenan Porter – Ideas on Replanting Plan for Nature Center
 - a. Keenan is home for the summer, and will start looking at the materials provided by Dr. Emile DeVito.
 - b. Keenan is looking at forest types in the area – species, northern hardwood forest, and will be identifying where trees can be saved, replanted, etc.
 - c. Keenan mentioned that invasive species removal will be key, to have successful replanting. Keenan mentioned the “hack and spray” approach, similar to what Dr. Devito had mentioned, where invasive species are manually cut, and herbicides are applied to the cut area, to isolate the removal of the plant.
 - d. Eric asked Keenan to research the availability of natural type herbicide for this effort.

Old Business

1. Environmental Commission Budget – Borough Administrator Eleanor McGovern has indicated that final budgets will be issued soon, however, the initial projection is that the Environmental Commission will be issued the budget requested (\$2,415).
2. Union County Community Garden – \$650 to spend;
 - a. Eric / Sandy walked the gardens on 5/16/17
 - b. The plan is to order soil and mulch in time for a planting event on 6/3/17
 - c. Margaret and Sandy will meet at the garden the week of the event then head to Amberg to purchase the plants
3. Grant Opportunities
 - a. NJ American Water – \$9000; Environmental Commission was not awarded this grant.

- b. ANJEC – \$1500; Environmental Commission was awarded this grant.
 - c. General discussion about grant applications – Teresa and Margaret will try to put together a list in the fall of suitable grants, and where possible try to write grants ourselves. It was also noted that the Master Gardeners group has a member who is a grant writer, who could possibly help.
 - d. Home Depot community grant – this grant can be used for the purchase of any Home Depot materials. Phyllis will look into this one, perhaps this could be used to purchase material for the Nature Center boardwalk extension.
4. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret / Carol – No update
 5. Continue development of bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy / Teresa – No update
 6. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary will resume working on this in the next month.
 7. Provide the 2016 Annual Report – Gary provided copies for distribution and is seeking Commission comment.
 8. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Dates in Fall 2017 appear to be the best times.

New Business

1. PMUA Environmental Fair – September 9, 2017 – the Environmental Commission was invited to attend this event. Further discussion to occur as the date gets closer.
2. Fanny Wood Day – September 17, 2017. No discussion, other than to mention the date.
3. Public Correspondence
 - a. Email to Mayor from Root family 4/27 – This was from a Terrill Middle School student who was proposing installation of bat houses in the Nature Center for a service learning project. Eric Gaulin declined the offer given the timing of this (goats arriving soon) and given that bat houses were installed in the Nature Center already.
 - b. Letter to Mayor 4/27 – from Coles Road student, found litter in the Nature Center on 4/1; Eric the received this letter on 5/16. Eric Gaulin worked with Pat Hoynes to respond back on behalf of the Mayor with the Environmental Commission contact information accepting the offer of assistance.
 - c. Email from Laura Melendez – 5/8 – deforestation on PSEG ROW near ELM near North and Paterson (Eric Responded, Referred to Shade Tree Commission. Commission had general follow up discussion on this matter. In general the NJ Board of Public Utilities requires maintenance

requiring any trees or tree branches within 75 of wires; Kathy Mitchell was told that PSEG would be doing follow up replanting in the Fall, including red bud trees and dog woods.

- d. Email from Evan Sena 5/14 – student in town was looking for a service learning project in the Nature Center consisting of litter pickup. At this time there is no litter in need of pickup. No further discussion.
4. Union County Mosquito Control Meeting – 5/23 – 8 PM, Scotch Hills Country Club. Hosted by the Scotch Plains Fanwood Historical Society. Environmental Commission members invited to attend.
5. Press releases – Eric will work with Victoria to put together either Facebook posts, TAP posts, or press releases through the Borough’s media consultants.

Review of Plans

1. 15 & 18 Madison Avenue, Block 7, Lots 4 & 5 (subdivision) – No comments on this plan from the Environmental Commission.
2. 15 Madison Avenue, Block 7, Lot 4 (2nd driveway) – Environmental Commission recommended pervious materials for drive to reduce amount of run off, and installation of rain garden or dry well to manage more water onsite.
1. 178 Herbert Avenue, Block 85, Lot 11 (bulk) various existing non-conformities; proposed to keep existing non-conformities; coverage will increase slightly – this plan was not discussed as hard copies were not present for the meeting.

Action Items

1. Follow up with Borough regarding repair of items in Nature Center – Phyllis
2. Follow up with Mayor and Fanwood Police regarding patrolling and security in Nature Center – Eric
3. Review the planting suggestions provided by Dr. DeVito, in advance of future discussions – all Commission Members.
4. Follow up with Julia regarding her Girl Scout project to close it out – Phyllis
5. Follow up with Eleanor McGovern regarding budget – Eric
6. Facilitate volunteer visits to the Nature Center – Phyllis
7. Facilitate goats to remove invasive species at the Nature Center
8. Work on the pollinator and butterfly gardens at Borough Hall as part of the Union County Means Green grant – Various
9. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret and Carol
10. Develop bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy and Teresa
11. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary
12. Finalize the 2016 Annual Report – Gary

13. Meet with Eagle Scout, discuss potential projects – Eric / Phyllis.
14. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary.

Adjournment

8:59