



## Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

### Minutes

June 15, 2017

#### **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission was called to order via reading of the NJ Open Public Meetings Act statement at 7:33 on June 15, 2017 at the Fanwood Community Center—2nd Floor Train Station by Eric Gaulin, Chair. 7:33 - NJ Open Public Meetings Act

#### **Members Present**

Eric Gaulin, Sandy Redder, Margaret Chowdhury, Phyllis Sandrock, Carol Walczuk, Kathy Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison).

#### **Members Absent**

Gary Szelc, Dave Schwartzberg, Victoria Gal, Teresa Keeler (Planning Board Liaison)

#### **Approval of Previous Minutes**

Minutes of the May 18, 2017 meeting were approved without comment.

#### **Nature Center Report**

##### 1. Caretaker Report

- a. Goats for Invasive Species Removal – The goats, from Green Goats (Rhinebeck, NY) left the Nature Center today (6/15/17); 20 goats, were in the Nature Center for three weeks; based on an assessment earlier this week, there appeared to be not enough vegetation left for the goats to eat.
- b. Goat Fencing – the consensus among the Environmental Commission is that there is no need to keep all of the goat fencing around the perimeter of the Nature Center; some portions of the fence would be useful to maintain a barrier along the Terrill Bible Chapel lot and also the PSEG ROW; as per the December 2016 proposal from Green Goats, they will remove any or all of the fence; Eric Gaulin will reach out to Clint Dicksen (Fanwood DPW) to see if the DPW has any interest in keeping the fence, or can store the fence at the DPW yard.
- c. Vandalism repairs – Fanwood Boy Scout Troop 33 offered to assist Nature Center Caretaker Phyllis Sandrock group together to help repair the bird blind; Repairs to the Peace Pole are ongoing.
- d. General discussion of signage at the entrances of the Nature Center – as per Fanwood Police, it is critical that the signage be updated, such that the

- rules for the area are fully laid out and can be enforced; Eric will design a sign and distribute to Environmental Commission and the Fanwood Police
- e. Andrew Abrantes and his friend Chris Compierchio, two 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Terrill Middle School built five bluebird houses and donated them to the Nature Center; these were installed in the Nature Center on 5/19; Eric submitted a news article to the Alternative Press (TAP) of Scotch Plains and Fanwood to thank the volunteers.
  - f. Wood Chip Spreading – on 5/20 Volunteers from All Saints Episcopal church in Scotch Plains, and on 5/21 volunteers and families from Boy Scout Troop 33 in Fanwood restored trails by spreading wood chips throughout the Nature Center; Eric submitted a news article to the Alternative Press (TAP) of Scotch Plains and Fanwood to thank the volunteers.
  - g. General Discussion Regarding Volunteers – Phyllis indicated some difficulty with coordinating / tracking DPW tools and equipment which had been provided for volunteers; the Environmental Commission discussed in the future, having volunteers bring their own equipment.
2. Other Items
- a. Girl Scout Gold Star Project – Julia Guarneri still needs to complete the repairs to the display case; Julia will be graduating from Scotch Plains Fanwood High School; the project was under Gary Szalc's guidance.
  - b. Justin Chaillet Troop 33 Eagle Scout project – potential project will include installation of trail signage, improvements to the trails, perhaps outlining the trails better; Eric Gaulin proposed naming one of the trails in the Nature Center after Dean Talcott; Sandy Redder suggested perhaps renaming a bridge after Dean.
  - c. Home Depot Grant – there is a Home Depot grant which can provide funds to applicants to buy materials for projects; Phyllis Sandrock will work on this grant.
3. Commission members to discuss previous info from Emile DeVito – this item was not discussed beyond the Environmental Commission agreed with Dr. DeVito's suggestion of small fenced areas in three separate areas within the Nature Center to restore plantings in the Nature Center.
4. Keenan Porter planting plan – Keenan Porter, Fanwood resident and student at SUNY ESF provided notes and a preliminary plan; Eric to distribute this information.

## **Old Business**

1. Environmental Commission Budget – general discussion; Eric reminded the Environmental Commission members that there was plenty of budget for classes and memberships available as requested in the budget.
2. Union County Community Garden Grant – \$650 to spend
  - a. Sandy Redder and Margaret Chowdury lead a planting session at the Pollinator and Butterfly Gardens at Fanwood Borough Hall on 6/3/17; also in attendance were Lin Vlasaty, Dean Talcott, Victoria Gal, and Eric Gaulin;
  - b. Watering is ongoing;
  - c. Sandy will be working on a map and signage to help educate the public about the types of plants in the gardens.
3. Grant Opportunities
  - a. The Environmental Commission discussed nothing beyond the previously mentioned Home Depot Grant
  - b. Open discussion focused on future grant writing; general consensus that grants would be written internally as much as possible among the Environmental Commission members
4. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret / Carol – No discussion.
5. Continue development of bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy / Teresa. No discussion.
6. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary
  - a. Eric proposed hiring former Environmental Commission secretary (Moenika Chowdury) to help Gary finish the ERI.
  - b. Eric proposed paying Moenika for 15 hours of help, at \$20 an hour (\$300)
  - c. Sandy made a motion to approve this expenditure; the Commission approved this unanimously
7. Finalize the 2016 Annual Report – Gary – draft was distributed for review and comment.
8. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary – no discussion.
9. PMUA Environmental Fair – September 9, 2017 – the Environmental Commission has committed to manning a table at this event.
10. Fanny Wood Day – September 17, 2017 – the Environmental Commission will discuss participation as the date approaches.
11. Bioblitz this weekend – June 16 and 17 to be held at Warinanco Park in Roselle.
12. Bus tour of Rain Gardens Hosted by Rahway River Association – June 17. Information was distributed by Eric via email.

## New Business

1. Correspondence
  - a. None

2. Climate Mayors Initiative
  - a. Eric read the recent press release noting that Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr announced that the Borough of Fanwood has announced that she will be joining the Climate Mayors (a.k.a. Mayors National Climate Action Agenda) network. Climate Mayors is a network of nearly 200 U.S. mayors representing over 50 million Americans, working together to strengthen local efforts for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting efforts for binding federal and global-level policy making. Future actions by Mayor Mahr include, but are not limited to, creating a community climate action plan to reduce the amount of emissions emitted by the Borough.
3. Sustainable NJ Summit – June 21 8:30 to 4:00 PM, cost \$35, College of NJ (ERG circulate program list) – Eric distributed information via email.
4. Kathy Mitchell attended a Sierra Club presentation about the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline on June 13. This presentation was held at the offices of consulting firm Princeton Hydro. Presentation discussed the potential impacts of the pipeline, where the pipeline will run, and the status of the pipeline. Kathy indicated that the pipeline is currently at a standstill, but it is still important to track this project. The Pilgrim Pipeline would carry 200,000 barrels a day of crude oil between Albany, NY and Linden, NJ. A parallel pipe would carry refined product in the opposite direction. In Fanwood, the proposed pipes would pass through the PSEG right of way.

### **Review of Plans**

1. No plans to review this meeting

### **Action Items**

1. Contact DPW, ask if they want goat fencing – Eric
2. Complete repair of vandalism in Nature Center – Phyllis
3. Design new signs for Nature Center, with rules – Eric
4. Follow up with Julia regarding her Girl Scout project to close it out – Phyllis
5. Work with potential Eagle Scout, Justin Chaillet – Eric
6. Work on Home Depot grant – Phyllis
7. Review planting plan info from Keehan Porter – All
8. Label plants, prepare map of pollinator and butterfly gardens – Sandy
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 with Moenika Chowdury's help – Gary
13. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.