



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Meeting Minutes
February 16, 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 7:30 on February 16, 2017 at the Fanwood Community Center—2nd Floor Train Station by Eric Gaulin, Chair.

Members Present

Gary Szelc, Eric Gaulin, Sandy Redder, Margaret Chowdhury, Phyllis Sandrock, Carol Walczuk, Victoria Gal, Teresa Keeler (Planning Board Liaison), Kathy Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison). Victoria will be appointed as an alternate member by the Mayor and Council at their regular meeting on March 6, 2017.

Members Absent

None

Members of the Public Present

Dean Talcott (Nature Center Caretaker); Marian Glenn (member of the Summit Environmental Commission and a Board Member of the Rahway River Watershed Association).

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes from the Environmental Commission meeting held on January 19, 2017 were approved by the Commission members without comment.

Nature Center Report

Dean Talcott attended to meeting to present a status update on the Nature Center, prior to his resignation as Nature Center Caretaker, effective 3/1/17. Dean provided a box of Nature Center maintenance materials, to be held by Phyllis Sandrock. Dean noted that since the fall of 2016, he had cut over 200 poison ivy vines at the base of multiple trees, including several black locust. Winter had caused some tree fal., with some logs down across portions of the goat fence and some walking paths. Dean needed some 2” by 6” lumber for repair for the boardwalk, which would be completed prior to his departure. Lastly, Dean noted that the Girl Scout (Julia Guarneri) working on the tree signage within the Nature Center, had made some good progress with her project, needing only to

complete repair of the corkboard of the Nature Center display case. Dean noted that Julia still had the only key to the display case.

Old Business

1. Submittal for payment the 2017 membership dues for ANJEC
 - a. Eric Gaulin dropped this off at Borough hall for payment on 2/13/17.
2. Consider getting the Environmental Commission page on the Borough of Fanwood website updated
 - a. Eric Gaulin corresponded with Councilman Tom Kranz to get the Environmental Commission page on the Borough of Fanwood Website updated, which has been completed.
3. Revise the independent Fanwood Environmental Commission website
 - a. If we still want to maintain it, it should be updated by someone with HTML coding experience, as the Borough does not have resources to support this;
 - b. for the time being, the link to this independent website, will be taken off the Environmental Commission page on the Borough of Fanwood Website, as the independent website has not been updated since 2015.
4. Submit the 2017 Environmental Commission budget request to Eleanor McGovern
 - a. Eric Gaulin submitted the budget request via email on 1/27/17
5. Seek examples of Environmental Commission Bylaws from ANJEC and other sources
 - a. Gary Szelc has reached out to ANJEC (the association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) for examples of bylaws, awaiting word back.
6. Provide the 2016 Annual Report
 - a. Gary Szelc to work on this.
7. Reach out to Keenan Porter and determine the progress made on the Nature Center replanting plan
 - a. Margaret Chowdhury to reach out to Keenan Porter.
8. Reach out to Ann and Larry Cihanek, the farmers who provided the herd of goats in for the Nature Center in 2015 and 2016
 - a. Gary Szelc and Phyllis Sandrock were the previous liaisons for this effort.
 - b. The farmers submitted a proposal (11/3/16) to the borough to have the goats eat vegetation over the entirety of the Nature Center for an approximate duration of 4 weeks, at an approximate cost of \$5000.
 - c. There would likely be more goats (possibly 20).
 - d. The proposal could not be approved by the Borough until after the budget was finalized. The group discussed some preparations needed prior to the return of the goats (finding the water buckets, removal of debris at the goat

- fence). The group agreed that Gary could reach out to the goat farmers to confirm our interest, and provide them an update.
9. Follow up on the Girl Scout Project occurring in the Nature Center
 - a. As noted above, Girl Scout (Julia Guarneri) working on the tree signage within the Nature Center, had made some good progress with her project, needing only to complete repair of the corkboard of the Nature Center display case. The Commission needs a copy of the key.
 10. Price out Environmental Commission T-Shirts
 - a. Phyllis Sandrock can get them printed at her place of business. Margaret Chowdury to send a copy of the digital image to Phyllis.
 - b. Sandy Redder will purchase the shirts, collect consensus on shirt color, and collect the list of sizes.
 11. Finish editing and finalize the revision to the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory
 - a. Gary Szelc to work on this
 12. Discuss Nature Center Caretaker's roles / responsibilities – the group discussed the need to revise the job description, which was likely written in the early 1990's when Dean Talcott was appointed.
 - a. Eric Gaulin to distribute an electronic copy and distribute for discussion.
 13. Monthly environmental message / recycling message
 - a. Eric Gaulin to setup a collaborative document on Google to collect information that we can use for a monthly message.

New Business

1. Grant Opportunity – ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grant –
 - a. \$1,500 max award;
 - b. budget / project due to grant writer by 3/11/17;
 - c. No discussion.
2. Grant Opportunity – NJ American Water
 - a. \$10,000 award;
 - b. budget / project due to grant writer by 2/24/17;
 - c. No discussion.
3. Grant Opportunity – Union County Community Garden – due 3/7/17.
 - a. Eric Gaulin believes that the grant could be used to maintain the existing butterfly and pollinator gardens located at the grounds of Borough Hall.
4. Association for butterflies – 2 page grant Due in April 2017
5. Green Acres Grant Discussion – The Borough of Fanwood submitted a Green Acres grant in January 2017 for improvements to the Nature Center.
 - a. The grant included the possibility of construction of a deer fence.
 - b. The Borough and Environmental Commission has received several inquiries from residents who are opposed to the fence.

- c. General discussion during the meeting centered around the pros (limited documented success elsewhere in keeping deer out) and cons (allowing native vegetation to return to the Nature Center) for such a fence.
 - d. General concurrence that there are too many deer in general, as the deer have few local predators and the deer continue to roam looking for food after they have exhausted the food supply, as they have in the Nature Center.
 - e. The Commission decided that there should be a long-term goals plan and mission statement for the Nature Center, such that there would be a foundation to start from, regardless of the project planned.
 - f. Along these same lines, the Commission discussed ways to educate the public and increase awareness of the purpose of the Nature Center, including having more educational events in the Nature Center and possibly having groups or businesses sponsor trails or sections of the Nature Center.
6. April 22, 2016 – Clean Communities Day. No further discussion.
 7. Visitor to the meeting, Marian Glenn was present representing the Rahway River Association – discussed the work of the Rahway River Watershed Association, encouraged individual membership signup and distributed a calendar of events held by the Rahway River Watershed Association.
 8. New email address for the Environmental Commission has been set up – Fanwood.EC.1895@gmail.com – this can be used for general distribution to the public.
 9. Consider getting the separate Environmental Commission website updated – Eric is still working on this.
 10. Environmental education center at Borough Hall – no discussion at this meeting
 11. Ordinance to oppose pipeline – no discussion at this meeting
 12. Ordinance to ban fracking – no discussion at this meeting

Review of Plans

1. Block 64, Lots 6.02 17-21; 225 LaGrande Avenue (Station Square) – Final site plan approval. Commission offered comments that as noted on earlier plans that native plantings should be used in the planting plan. Also, the Commission encouraged the applicant and future occupants to minimize the use of herbicides and pesticides at this development
2. Block 55, Lot 1; 1 South Avenue (T-Mobile/Sprint) – Extension of stay on temporary tower – no objection by the Environmental Commission.

Action Items

1. Revise the independent Fanwood Environmental Commission website

2. Seek examples of Environmental Commission Bylaws from ANJEC and other sources
3. Provide the 2016 Annual Report
4. Reach out to Keenan Porter and determine the progress made on the Nature Center replanting plan
5. Reach out to Ann and Larry Cihanek, the farmers who provided the herd of goats
6. Follow up on the Girl Scout Project occurring in the Nature Center
7. Create Environmental Commission T-Shirts
8. Finish editing and finalize the revision to the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory
9. Revise the Nature Center Caretaker job description and find a new Caretaker
10. Work on the monthly environmental message
11. Apply for grants
12. Develop mission statement and goals for the Nature Center
13. Environmental education center at Borough Hall – no discussion at this meeting
14. Ordinance to oppose pipeline – no discussion at this meeting
15. Ordinance to ban fracking – no discussion at this meeting

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:23 by Eric Gaulin, Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:30 on March 16, 2017, in Fanwood Community Center—2nd Floor Train Station.