



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Minutes
April 20, 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 April 20, 2017 at the Fanwood Community Center—2nd Floor Train Station by Eric Gaulin, Chair.

Members Present

Gary Szelc, Eric Gaulin, Sandy Redder, Phyllis Sandrock, Carol Walczuk, Victoria Gal, Teresa Keeler (Planning Board Liaison).

Members Absent

Margaret Chowdhury, Dave Schwartzberg, Kathy Mitchell (Borough Council Liaison).

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the March 16, 2017 meeting were approved pending correction of the date of the upcoming Union County Bioblitz to June 16 and 17.

Nature Center Report

1. Status of Nature Center Caretaker hiring – Phyllis Sandrock was formally hired at Nature Center Caretaker on April 15.
2. Nature Center Vandalism – on April 1, 2017, Phyllis discovered significant vandalism in the Nature Center Vandalism to multiple scout projects including Bird Blind (multiple boards smashed out of the fence), Peace Pole (multiple signs broken off the pole), Toad Abode (remaining items broken), Bird Feeders (broken), Bird House (destroyed), Buddha Statue (destroyed), and Display Case Window (soiled with mud). Additionally, trash consisting of broken beer bottles, cigarette lighters, fast food wrappers, cans of beer and evidence of a campfire under construction were found in various areas of the NC. All refuse & damaged items have been removed from the Nature Center. Cost estimate to repair &/or replace destroyed items was provided to Borough Administrator Eleanor McGovern. Repairs to the birdhouse & Peace Pole signage are underway. Eric Gaulin noted that the Bird Blind was an Eagle Scout Project built in 2008 by Chris Kecut of Troop 903, and the Peace Pole was a Girl Scout Bronze Award Project built by Troop 547 of Scotch Plains in 2004.
3. Phyllis suggested that nature trail cameras could be beneficial to install in areas where vandalism has occurred to supplement police efforts.

4. New GIS Map of Nature Center – Eric Gaulin worked with the Union County GIS Bureau to produce a new scaled map of the Nature Center, with a high resolution aerial photograph. The aerial photograph resolution was high enough to identify and draw the trails on the map. A GIS layer of the trails and other features was created. The map is saved as a georeferenced PDF, allowing users to measure scale and location on the map.
5. Visit to Nature Center on 4/2/17 by Emile DeVito a conservation ecologist from the NJ Conservation Foundation – Dr. Emile DeVito visited the Nature Center with Dave Schwartzberg, Phyllis Sandrock, and Eric Gaulin to suggest ways to restore native plant life in the Nature Center. Dr. DeVito suggested:
 - a. Perform a baseline plant species inventory of the NC
 - b. Identify three smaller areas which could be replanted and protected with fencing
 - c. Removing Japanese knotweed via more aggressive means
6. Dr. DeVito identified three suggested planting areas on a Nature Center map, with some suggested planting types. He further suggested trying to line the materials up in Fall 2017, for a spring 2018 planting. The map with the suggested planting areas was shared with the commission.
7. Planting plan / Keenan Porter – Eric Gaulin transmitted copies of the GIS basefiles and the suggested planting plan from Dr. DeVito to Keenan Porter, a Fanwood resident who is a student at SUNY ESF to support the planting plan that he is working on.
8. Girl Scout Gold Star Project – Julia Guarneri – Phyllis gave a display case key, along with laminated items, to Julia, who is a Girl Scout who is updating the interior of the NC display case as part of a Gold Award project.
9. Clint Dicksen at the Fanwood DPW to remove a tree which had fallen across Luisi's Trail (south side of the Nature Center)
10. Phyllis announced that on Clean Community Day, 4/22/17, debris clearing would be performed at the Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River in the Nature Center. Environmental Commission members and members of the public would be welcome.

Old Business

1. Environmental Commission Budget – Eric received a copy of a budget in the Commission mailbox. Further follow up will be needed with Eleanor McGovern since the budget was for only \$500, compared to the \$2,415 requested on January 27, 2017.
2. Clean Community Day – April 22, 2017. Commission will participate in town cleanup or Nature Center cleanup as the members choose.
3. ANJEC Training – March 25, 2017. This was attended by Eric Gaulin, Phyllis Sandrock, Margaret Chowdhury, Carol Walczuk, and Gary Szelc who gave a

- presentation on site plan review. Eric shared copies of the presentation materials to the Commission via Google docs.
4. Goats to remove invasive species (schedule, budget, etc) – general discussion. Since the budget has not yet been approved, scheduling cannot occur yet. Phyllis and Gary Szelc to reach out to the goat herders Ann and Larry Chianek to see if they had picked up the Environmental Commission buckets from the Nature Center last year.
 5. Purchase / produce Environmental Commission T-Shirts – shirts were purchased, screen printed and distributed thanks Sandy Redder and Phyllis Sandrock.
 6. Monthly environmental message – Ongoing activity. First message was distributed regarding yard fertilizer use. Teresa suggested tick awareness as the next topic.
 7. Grant Opportunities
 - a. Union County Community Garden – \$900 award, kickoff meeting on April 26 – Eric Gaulin will complete the paperwork and Teresa will attend the meeting.
 - b. NJ American Water – Pending award decision.
 - c. ANJEC – Pending award decision.
 - d. PSEG Conservation Grant – ***(no discussion – Borough not eligible)***
 8. Fanwood Environmental Commission Facebook page – Victoria Gal to manage this.
 9. Maintain the printed / educational materials / banner / etc in our space at Borough Hall – Margaret Chowdhury to manage this.
 10. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – ***(discussion tabled until Margaret Chowdhury returns)***
 11. Continue development of bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy / Teresa are continuing discussion.
 12. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary working on this.
 13. Provide the 2016 Annual Report – Gary working on this.

New Business

1. TWA for Station Square – provided to Environmental Commission as a courtesy, no discussion.
2. PMUA Environmental Fair – September 9, 2017. Further discussion as the date gets closer.
3. Fanny Wood Day – September 17, 2017. Further discussion as the date gets closer.
4. Bird House Project – local students, middle school Andrew Brantes and Chris asked if they could build birdhouses to donate to the Nature Center for their

- Middle School Service Learning project. Eric and Phyllis will meet with the students to review and discuss.
5. Eagle Scout Project – Justin Chaillet, Boy Scout Troop 33 is seeking do an Eagle Scout project of some type in the Nature Center. Eric Gaulin provided ideas such as building additional boardwalk, building a new trail along the stream bank, installing new message boards, or even installing new toad habitats. Phyllis and Eric to meet Justin in the field.
 6. Debbie Naha – edible plant walk – The Commission discussed having another edible plant walk sometime during May thru June. Gary to inquire.

Review of Plans

1. 389 Midway Avenue, Block 38, Lot 3 – proposed driveway expansion; existing non-conformities include parcel width, lot area, side yard setback; proposed non-conformance is driveway side yard setback (from 3’ to 0’) – no objection noted by the Environmental Commission.
2. 95 Farley Avenue, Block 58, Lot 23 – proposed addition; existing non-conformities for two different front yard setbacks, lot width, lot area; proposed to keep existing non-conformities; coverage will decrease slightly – no objection noted by the Environmental Commission.

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. Reach out to Ann and Larry Chianek regarding goat schedule – Phyllis and Gary.
7. Attend the 4/26 kickoff meeting at the Count to get the Union County Community Garden Grant – Teresa
8. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret and Carol
9. Develop bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy and Teresa
10. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary
11. Provide the 2016 Annual Report – Gary
12. Meet with middle school students who are building bird houses – Eric / Phyllis.
13. Meet with Eagle Scout, discuss potential projects – Eric / Phyllis.
14. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.