



Borough of Fanwood Environmental Commission

Minutes
July 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 7:30 on July 20, 2017 at the Fanwood Community Center—2nd Floor Train Station by Eric Gaulin, Chairperson of the Fanwood Environmental Commission.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

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

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the June 15, 2017 meeting were approved as corrected.

Nature Center Report

1. Caretaker Report

- a. Goat Fencing – Fencing is awaiting removal by Green Goats (Rhinebeck, NY). They have been contacted to remove the fencing as per the contract.
- b. Vandalism repairs – Peace pole signs have been restored/replaced. Bird blind still needs to be repaired by Fanwood Boy Scout Troop 33.
- c. General discussion of signage at the entrances of the Nature Center – No update; Eric still needs design a sign and distribute to Environmental Commission and the Fanwood Police
- d. Numerous dead trees are present in the Nature Center. The Commission discuss reaching out to the Shade Tree Commission to seek their help and determine the next steps.
- e. Dumping is still happening (possible cause is landscapers for Bible Chapel). Dog waste bags seem to be prevalent near the stream and may be washing down from area storm drains. It was suggested that a reminder be sent to residents not to dump waste into the storm drains via the weekly email.
- f. Display Case is still awaiting a re-fresh by Julia Guarneri..

2. Other Items

- a. Justin Chaillet Troop 33 Eagle Scout project – potential project will include installation of trail signage, improvements to the trails, perhaps outlining the trails better – no discussion.
3. Keenan Porter planting plan – Keenan Porter, Fanwood resident and student at SUNY ESF provided notes and a preliminary plan; Eric to distributed this information.
- a. Discuss information from Keenan – it was agreed that the removal of any living tree is not supported. We should focus on removing invasive plants and replanting areas specified in the Dr. DeVito plan.
 - b. Keenan conducted more detailed research on the species composition of forests in our area; divided the nature center into different areas based on topography, hydrology, and surrounding land use; utilize species specific to these areas (riparian, sloped, flat, and edge) to create a more varied and functional environment; next step is completing rendered concept diagrams

Old Business

1. Union County Community Garden Grant – \$650 to spend (\$91 remaining)
 - a. The gardens are looking good and many plants are currently in bloom.
 - b. It was suggested that repellent be purchased to help some of the plants that the deer and rabbits are eating.
 - c. We will also try to buy bulbs to plant for Spring color.
 - d. It was suggested that an information session on the gardens be held in August for the public. This may include types of plants, information on deadheading, the type of gardens (rain, pollinator and butterfly).
2. Grant Opportunities
 - a. Home Depot Grant – there is a Home Depot grant which can provide funds to applicants to buy materials for projects – still in progress.
 - b. Green Acres - we have been recommended for funding and are waiting to hear on final approval and amount. Eric has asked the mayor for a copy of the grant to share with the members.
3. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret / Carol – No discussion.
4. Continue development of bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy / Teresa. No discussion.
5. 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. No update.

6. Finalize the 2016 Annual Report – Gary – Need confirmation that the copy Gary sent was finalized.
7. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary – no discussion.
8. PMUA Environmental Fair – September 9, 2017 – the Environmental Commission has committed to manning a table at this event.
9. Fanny Wood Day – September 17, 2017 – the Environmental Commission will discuss participation as the date approaches.

New Business

1. Correspondence
 - a. None
2. A brief discussion was held concerning the report of Rats in the downtown area, the sightings on other streets and the potential use of poisons by homeowners that could harm children/pets/wildlife. It was noted that this may be a discussion at the next Council meeting and Kathy will report back.
3. The Vinton Circle storm runoff discharges into the PSE&G right of way and then drains into the outdoor classroom in the Nature Center. Methods to mitigate this were discussed and it was suggested that a possible solution may be a rain garden in the PSE&G right of way.

Review of Plans

1. 187 King Street, Block 105, Lot 16
 - a. **Proposed 31' high radio antenna (15' allowable)**
 - b. Existing non-conformities include lot width, side yard setback (two places), maximum improvement coverage (3.71% over), pool rear yard setback (12' vs 15')
 - c. No comments from the Environmental Commission.
2. 1 Shady Lane, Block 111, Lot 18
 - a. Corner lot property seeking **Front yard patio setback (30' required, 14.7' proposed)**
 - b. Existing non-conformities include front yard setback (two places), lot width, and lot area
 - c. Environmental Commission recommended pervious materials to reduce amount of run off, and installation of rain garden or native plantings to manage more water onsite.
3. 9 Stewart Place, Block 26, Lot 33
 - a. Corner lot property seeking **Front yard patio setback (30' required, 10' proposed), side yard setback, maximum improvement coverage (39.95%, 35% max)**
 - b. Existing non-conformities include front yard setback (two places), lot width, lot area, rear yard setback

- c. Environmental Commission recommended pervious materials to reduce amount of run off, and installation of rain garden or native plantings to manage more water onsite.

Action Items

1. Set up a test plot within the Nature Center to study various methods to eradicate Japanese Knot Weed – Phyllis / Margaret
2. Follow up with the Borough, to determine if the Borough has a land survey of the Fanwood Nature Center – Kathy
3. Follow up with the Borough to get / distribute copies of the 2017 Green Acres Grant Application - Kathy
4. Follow up with Julia regarding her Girl Scout project to close it out – Phyllis
5. Contact the Terrill Bible Chapel to cease landscaper dumping on the Nature Center – Kathy
6. Send communication via the Fanwood weekly email about storm water management, and not throwing things into the catch basins in town – Eric
7. Purchase repellent to help some of the plants that the deer and rabbits are eating in the gardens at Borough Hall – Sandy
8. Set up a date in August to hold information sessions on the Pollinator, Butterfly and Rain gardens. Demo deadheading, benefits, etc. – Sandy, Margaret and Carol.
9. Purchase bulbs for the Pollinator and Butterfly Gardens for Spring color – Sandy
10. Look into placing recycle cans/bins on each side of the Train Station – Kathy
11. Communicate with Borough or Health Department to learn more about the rat problem behind the businesses downtown – Kathy
12. Explore with PSE&G methods to mitigate storm runoff from Vinton Circle into the PSE&G and NC – Dave.
13. Label plants, prepare map of pollinator and butterfly gardens – Sandy
14. Design new signs for Nature Center, with rules – Eric
15. Work with potential Eagle Scout, Justin Chaillet – Eric
16. Work on Home Depot grant – Phyllis
17. Review planting plan info from Keehan Porter – All
18. Develop a mission statement and goals for the Nature Center – Margaret and Carol
19. Develop bylaws for the Environmental Commission – Sandy and Teresa
20. Finalize the Fanwood Environmental Resources Inventory – Gary
21. Finalize the 2016 Annual Report with Moenika Chowdury's help – Gary
22. Find potential dates for edible plant walk – Gary

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.