

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Meeting
Minutes
March 5, 2019**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hendrickson at 7:41 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Members in Attendance

Neil Hendrickson
Jason Giroud
Jerry Cook
Christina Albrecht
Jonathan Heller
Robert Becker
Todd Terricone
Judith Tutela
Liz Duffy

Members Absent

Steve Foster

Minutes

Ms. Albrecht moved, and Mr. Cook seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for December 4, 2018. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Albrecht moved, and Mr. Heller seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for February 5, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

Application for an Authorization under Freshwater Wetlands General Permit 24 – Block 39 Lot 13, 32 Ridge Road - Noted

AOC (Areas of Concern)

Block 70, Lot 27.25, 25 Apple Tree Road, 550-gallon #2 heating oil – no further action – Noted
Block 39, Lot 53.09, 51 Tannery Road-5,000-gallon diesel fuel tank-Remediation- Noted
Block 21, Lot 1, 295 Route 22 East – ground water – Remediation- Noted

Correspondence

Grant WM16-013 Section 319(h) 5th Quarterly Performance Report #8- Noted

New Business

NJ Community Forestry Program

Mr. Becker gave an overview of the program and reviewed the handout that he provided for the meeting as follows: Having an approved Community Forestry Management Plan provides liability protection under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. It also provides grant opportunities and access to technical information and peer to peer interactions through meetings and media postings. The program covers many different areas. Some examples are training, tree inventory,

public education, stormwater management and tree maintenance. The Township is currently in approved status. The plan needs to be revised in 2019. Each municipality must accrue a minimum total of eight (8) Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits annually to maintain approved status Mr. Becker volunteered to continue to be the liaison.

Mr. Becker moved, and Mr. Heller seconded, a motion to recommend for the Township through the tree advisory committee continue to meet the guidelines of the NJ Community Forestry program. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hendrickson noted that that a notice was submitted to go on the Township's Readington News page advising of the new subcommittees and asking for additional volunteers. He also noted that it didn't make it in for this month. A reminder will be sent to try and get it in for next month.

2019 ANJEC Grants

It was noted that all grants should go through Vita's office once identified and prepared. Some ideas were discussed. It was noted that they should be coordinated with the Open Space Committee.

Michael Jones of 33 Oakland Drive West was present and commented on the grant process and provided some suggestions and recommendations based on his experience.

The committee discussed and agreed that the Environmental Commission would apply for a pollinator.

Sustainable New Jersey

Mr. Becker gave an overview of the program as follows: Readington Township is at Bronze level. There hasn't been anything done in 4 years. There is a list of many action items under different categories such as energy, food, health and wellness, natural resources and waste management to name a few that you can do as a community to earn points. 150 points are needed. Every committee should be involved to document the things that they are doing. A meeting was held with Vita and it was determined that the goal is to create a process that continuously documents the actions taken by the Township's administration and committees (boards) that support the criteria of the Sustainable New Jersey Program. Google Docs or another shared application will be used to document progress. Mr. Becker volunteered to be the coordinator with all the committees.

Mr. Heller moved, and Ms. Albrecht seconded that the Environmental Commission begin the administration of the data collection for the Sustainable New Jersey program to coordinate a Green team and for Mr. Becker to be the liaison and make a presentation to the Township Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Arbor Day

Mr. Heller noted that trees were ordered and need to be picked up on April 26th. It was discussed whether additional trees could be purchased so that there will be enough for the 3rd grade education program.

Michael Jones of 33 Oakland Drive West was present and commented on tying wildlife habitat identification to specific tree species to better educate the community.

Mr. Heller noted that April 13th is the Raritan Headwaters Stream Cleanup

Community Solar Update

Mr. Becker provided an update on the pilot program as follows: The next phase for the pilot program is that applications are submitted and reviewed by the public service commission. It was noted that it would have to be brought up to the Township Committee due to the way the Township's ordinances are currently written it is not permitted. The Community Solar is designed for people who don't want solar panels on their own home but want the opportunity to buy into a shared field. The municipality provides the field and the people who buy into the program get the benefit. After some discussion, it was determined that Mr. Becker would look at some potential surfaces in the Township that could be good locations and bring back to the committee for further review and discussion. It was also noted that it could be a good option for a grant.

Wildlife Advisory Committee

Adam Mueller was present and gave an overview of the proposed Deer Management Program as follows: Readington Township currently leases out properties to hunting clubs from all over the state based on bids received. This program will continue to stay in place. Properties can only support a certain number of deer before the deer start causing damage to the community with such things as car accidents, Lyme Disease as well as damage to crops and forests. Readington Township has 30 to 40 times the amount of deer over capacity. A secondary program is being proposed. It would be an individual permit-based program. Many local towns have similar plans in place already. The mission statement of the program is "to encourage and facilitate hunting access on public lands to address the overpopulation of white tail deer while reducing and maintaining the number of white tail deer on township property to a manageable and healthy level ". This program will allow individual hunters to hunt on township owned property. It would be a lottery-based program. Properties would be approved by the Township. There would be a limit 1 hunter per 10 acres and quotas would be set. There will be strict requirements for applicants. Background checks will be done and, safety orientation will be required. It would be bow hunting only. The program was reviewed by the State of NJ Fish and Wildlife as well as by a private biologist that volunteers to work with towns to set up these programs. Regulations would be above and beyond what is required by the state. The program will be open to residents of the township only

Ms. Duffy noted that last year the Township Committee had authorized two parcels to go to the Hunterdon County hunting program. It was noted that it would be further looked at to see why the properties were not used by the county.

Mr. Hendrickson moved, and Mr. Giroud seconded a motion to support the draft Deer Management Plan proposal. The motion carried unanimously. It was noted that Mr. Mueller would present it to Administration and the Township Committee.

Mr. Mueller also noted that they want to educate the community, so they are aware when it is hunting season for safety reasons. He stated that the main goal to reduce the deer population.

Site Plan Review and Comment

It was noted that Mr. Heller attended the TRC conference calls for the Thomas Andrew's Lot Line adjustment application and the PMG Retail application for the Quick Chek. He noted that both applications were deemed complete and scheduled for hearings.

Public Comment

Michael Jones of 33 Oakland Drive West was present and stated that it was very difficult to locate items on website such as stormwater reports and maps of wildlife inventory. Mr. Jones suggested that these

reports be linked directly to the Environmental Commission page for easier access. Mr. Jones also questioned whether there was an inventory of all stormwater management systems in the Township. The committee requested that Mr. Jones put his suggestions into an email to Mr. Heller for further review.

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the committee members to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Ann Marie Lehberger

Secretary to the Environmental Commission