

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2020**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hendrickson at 7:00 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, Chair
Robert Becker
Jeff Charney
Jerry Cook
Stephen Foster
Jonathan Heller
Susan Masinda
Todd Terricone

Minutes

Mr. Foster moved, and Ms. Masinda seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for March 3, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

Resubmission of Application for Freshwater Wetlands General Permit 11, Flood Hazard Area Verification, and a Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit – Readington Commons/Hunterdon Heights at Readington Block 4 Lots 51 & 52- It was noted that the Environmental Commission still has concerns regarding the flooding and the effects on stream quality.

Application for Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation -Line Verification-Township of Readington Block 81 Lot 1-702 US Route 202-Noted

Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation/Line Verification-PSE&G- Various Block/Lots-Noted
Freshwater Wetlands General Permit#24 -101 Readington Road, Block 55 Lot 32-Noted

AOC (Areas of Concern)

Block 53 Lot 19-43 Readington Road-550-gallon #2 Heating Oil Underground Storage Tank-No Further Action- Noted

Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification NJDEP Case# 20-02-26-0641-48-Route 78 East-Diesel Fuel-Noted

Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification NJDEP Case# 20-02-26-0950-39-1 Haver Place-Diesel Fuel-Noted

Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification NJDEP Case# 20-03-05-0925-00-15 Shepherds Lane-Oil Heating#2 -Noted

Updated Receptor Evaluation Submission-138 Kosciuszko Road NJDEP Case#93-01-25-1526-23-Noted

Response Action Outcome-NJDEP Case#90-10-12-1245- 414 Route 22 West -Noted

Correspondence

319(H) Grant Quarterly Performance Report #12-Mr. Foster noted that they had some delays on the project but are moving forward with completion. Mr. Foster also noted that a split rail fence will be needed at Hillcrest Park around one of the rain gardens abutting the parking area for protection. Letters from Sustainable NJ both dated 2/26/20 for Grants Awarded-Noted

New Business

Discussion- Holland Brook/Silver Bit and Spur Project

Laura Tessieri, Executive Director of the North Jersey RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) was present. She explained that they are a nonprofit organization that looks to meet community needs through conservation. She further explained that they have been involved in the Readington Township's 319 grant providing the technical assistance. She noted that part of their outreach program involves connecting with farms that have horses as well as other equine producers. They have been working with the landowner at Silver Bit and Spur Farm. The current problem there is that there are too many horses on one paddock and the runoff goes right into the Holland Brook. Ms. Tessieri explained that they are working to assist them in coming up with a solution to allow for better manure management. She noted that they are currently finalizing the plans and they will be submitted to NJDEP (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection) who will ultimately provide financial assistance for the project.

It was also noted that PSE&G will support the project and plantings in the area under the power lines.

Chair Hendrickson noted that the volunteer schedule has been limited due to the COVID pandemic.

Mario Orlandi was present and explained that he will be leading a new Stream and Groundwater subcommittee that will report to both the Open Space Committee and the Environmental Commission. He explained that the committee's main objectives will be:

- To promote clean water restoration, preservation, practices, and projects in Readington and in areas where our water shed is connected to
- To coordinate current ongoing as well as future water related projects under a single umbrella
- To seek out and foster organizational synergies through partnerships with like-minded organizations like Raritan Headwaters, The Musconetcong Water Shed Association, Sierra Club, and Trout Unlimited
- To coordinate and collaborate with county and other agencies like DEP that are involved in similar efforts
- To work with and help coordinate Readington's open space preservation efforts involving land parcels that incorporate or border on any of our streams and rivers

Other Business

Wildlife Subcommittee Deer Management Program Recommendations

Adam Mueller was present on behalf of the Wildlife Subcommittee and gave a recap of the 2019-2020 Individual Hunting Permit program noting that it was the first year for the program. He stated that it was a bow only program that was open to Readington residents only. He noted that they harvested 19 deer for the season. Mr. Mueller explained that deer are an ongoing problem across the state. He noted that a deer survey was performed on the open space properties in the Township by Dr. Kelly of Raritan Valley Community College. The results of the survey indicate that the Township has between 132-136 deer per square mile which is 13 times the amount of deer that they should have. Mr. Mueller explained that the subcommittee came up with some proposed changes for the upcoming season to increase harvest numbers as follows:

- Open the program to other than Readington residents only using a preference ranking through guidance from the Township Attorney
- The Township would be responsible for procuring and posting signage on all properties

- Some improvements and increased access of the online Harvest Reporting System
- Township to pay for entire donation butcher cost for participation in the Hunters Helping the Hungry program
- Use of both firearms and bow pursuant to all state regulations on a property by property basis
- Hunters be allowed to leave tree stands in trees between seasons at their own risk
- Motorized vehicles to be allowed strictly on a case by case basis on the larger properties
- Expedite permit and lease renewals
- Introduce several additional properties into the program to increase program participation

There were several questions from the Environmental Commission members and members of the public.

Jeff Charney questioned if other viable approaches that are used in other Townships were also considered.

Mr. Mueller noted that opening more properties is the most efficient and cost-effective way to reduce the deer population. He also explained that the program was modeled after other towns and noted that they also worked closely with state to develop the program.

Cheryl Filler was present and questioned if other methods of controlling deer were considered. She also expressed concern about the safety of the Township residents who would be using the properties for recreation and enjoyment.

Jason Giroud was present and noted that he participated in the program last year. He explained that he spoke to several people who were out on the properties and they were all receptive to the program.

Steve Foster questioned if firearms were being maximized on the larger properties. He also questioned if there was any consideration to coordinating with private properties in addition to the Township owned properties.

Anne Owen was present from the Reading Trail Association and expressed concern about safety to the horse and riders. She explained that horses are extremely reactive to the sound of firearms. She suggested a specific safety time during the day where no hunting would be done.

Another member of the public expressed concern about safety and agreed with Ms. Owen's comments about a safety time for riders.

Jason Giroud returned and noted that the firearm season is limited to two months of the year, He also noted that private properties abut open space properties where guns were being used.

Betty Ann Fort suggested limiting the season and closing properties for a few weeks out of the year.

Mr. Mueller noted that the program is focusing on community outreach to educate the public about hunting. Mr. Foster stressed the importance of educating the public.

Shelia Paciullo, chair of the Readington Township Museum Committee was present and requested that the Bowman Stickney property be permanently removed from consideration as a hunting property for the Deer Management Program noting that it is actively used by the community.

Mr. Mueller provided closing comments and requested the support of the Environmental Commission. It was noted the results from the hunting clubs would also be provided once received.

Mr. Heller moved, and Mr. Charney seconded, a motion to support the Wildlife Subcommittee Deer Management Program Recommendations with the condition that a note of a clear public community outreach program be added to the document. The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Cook	Yes	Mr. Heller	Yes
Mr. Foster	Yes	Chair Hendrickson	Yes
Ms. Masinda	No	Mr. Becker	Yes
Mr. Terricone	Yes	Mr. Charney	Yes

Mr. Giroud volunteered to assist in the community outreach of the program.

Environmental Commission 2019 Annual Report

Mr. Foster moved, and Mr. Heller seconded, a motion to approve the 2019 Annual Report. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Becker discussed grants and provided an update on grants as follows:

Date	Title	Objective	\$	\$ Cost	Due Date	Status
11/29/2019	ANJEC	Pollinator Garden	\$1,000		5/5/2019	Awarded
11/29/2019	Electric Vehicle Charging Station	Two port charging station	\$6,000		Open	Awarded
11/29/2019	Roots for Rivers	Tree planting in riparian buffer Holland Brook 523	\$3,750	in kind	12/31/2019	Awarded
11/29/2019	Community Forestry Stewardship	Any aspect of community tree program	\$10,00-\$20,000	In kind	5/29/2020	Not Released
1/15/2020	ANJEC	Open Space Stewardship Projects	\$1,500		12/20/2019	Submitted
1/3/2020	Roots for Rivers	Tree planting in riparian buffer Bloy Farm 319H	\$7,123		12/13/2019	Awarded
12/13/2020	Sustainable NJ	Apply to any action category in program	\$10,000	Meadows	2/14/2020	Awarded
1/3/2020	Clean Fleet Electric Vehicle Incentive	\$4,000 toward electric vehicle purchase and \$1,500 dual port level 2 station	As indicated		7/31/2020	Submitted
6/23/2020	Water Shed Inst. Small Grant Cycle	Water Quality, Science & Education. Stormwater Policy, Green Infrastructure & Climate Change Resiliency	\$8,500		7/31/2020	Reviewing

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the committee members to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Lehberger, Secretary to the Environmental Commission