

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
July 7, 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. Heller moved, and Ms. Masinda seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for June 2, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

Application for Letter of Interpretation- Somerville Associates-Block 14 Lot 49- 3576 Route 22-Noted
Application for Flood Hazard Area and Freshwater wetlands Individual Permit-PSE&G Electric Transmission Line Right-Of-Ways Vegetation Maintenance Program-Noted
Application for Freshwater Wetlands General Permit 16 Wetland Habitat Creation or Enhancement Block 11 Lot 9-Noted
Application for Land Use Regulation Program (LURP)- Algonquin Gas Transmission LLC-Noted

AOC (Areas of Concern)

Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification NJDEP Case# 20-06-01-1053-51-632 Old York Rd.-Oil Heating#2 Heating Underground Storage Tank- Noted
No Further Action- #2 Heating Underground Storage Tank- NJDEP Case# 20-01-30-1128-32-24 Kline Blvd.-Noted
No Further Action- #2 Heating Underground Storage Tank- NJDEP Case# 19-12-09-1011-56- 22 Dreahook Rd.-Noted

Correspondence

Letter from Open Space Advisory Board to House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure dated 6/3/20-Noted

New Business

Stream Restoration Project

Chair Hendrickson noted that a resident received a grant for a stream restoration project at Holland Brook that will also include a portion of Township property.

Stream Monitoring

Mayor Heller explained the process for stream monitoring that he has been participating in to assess the quality of the streams in the Township.

Tree Removal Permits

Chair Hendrickson explained that the tree permit program is just getting started and noted that he reviewed proposals at the following two properties:

41 Tree Top Road
5 Broad Street

Chair Hendrickson explained that they are still working out the formal process for review and approval. He noted that both applicants were proposing plenty of shade tree replacements and explained that there is some flexibility for the residents. It was noted that the Zoning Officer will be issuing the permits.

Other Business

Eagle's Nest

Adam Mueller was present on behalf of the Wildlife Subcommittee and noted that PSE&G will be removing the nest as part of their tower replacement project. He explained that they must apply for a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and will remove the nest during non-breeding season, store it and replace it once the project is completed.

Trex

It was noted that the collection box that was in the municipal building has been moved to the library.

Reporting of Dead Ash Trees

It was discussed that a protocol should be put in place for residents to report dead ash trees. It was noted that it is often difficult to determine the property lines between residential and Township property. It was discussed that the Environmental Commission would send a memo to the Administrator and the Township Attorney to determine the legal protocol on how to establish ownership.

Wildlife Subcommittee Deer Management Program Recommendations

Adam Mueller was present on behalf of the Wildlife Subcommittee. He noted that since the last meeting he worked with some of the residents who had concerns to try and work out a compromise that would work for all parties. He highlighted the proposed changes as follows:

- All signs are recommended to be installed around the perimeters of the hunted properties for safety and to make them permanent to be left year after year.
- Bow and firearms allowed where compliant with state law and F&W safety zones.
- All properties will be permanently posted notifying visitors of hunting activity.
- All firearms hunting from elevated tree stands, no exceptions.
- All hunting (bow & firearm) prohibited on Sundays on Township property (existing rule).
- Firearms hunting prohibited between the hours of 10am - 3pm except as follows, when firearms may be used:
 - Saturdays
 - 6-day firearm season (typically 2nd week of Dec)
 - Properties without posted Township trails
- Maps would be created for each hunted property that clearly delineate the required safety zones.
- Screw in steps for tree stands will be banned.

- Allow hunters to leave tree stands in the tree between seasons at their own risk.
- An exception to allow the use of motorized vehicles for hunters with disabilities for the purposes of deer recovery, hanging/removing tree stands, and filling feeders.
- The subcommittee is committed to providing community outreach, awareness, education, and engagement.

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

Susan Masinda asked for clarification on the use of motorized vehicles. She also questioned if there were specific properties that were not allowed firearms. She requested that it could be advertised and posted so that the residents were aware of the properties that were being hunted. Mr. Mueller noted that it would be done as part of the community outreach program.

Julie Allen expressed concern about the properties not being user friendly for hikers and neighbors who would like to be able to use the trails. She noted that there should be a balance and there should be some properties with trails that do not have hunting on them.

Chair Hendrickson noted that the goal is to achieve a compromise.

Betty Ann Fort expressed concern about the number of additional properties that were being added this year and suggested better marketing and increasing the number of hunters instead of using more land. She also noted that during the pandemic many more residents have been using the trails.

Mr. Mueller noted that firearm hunting only occurs two months a year in December and January.

It was noted that this is has become a crisis situation and there needs to be an effective means to control the herd of deer. It was also noted that once the herd is reduced, it will be more manageable.

Susan Masinda noted that there is a program being run by the New Jersey Farm Bureau trying to encourage private farm owners to open their properties for hunting. Mr. Mueller agreed it was a good idea and would like to work with her to look into it further.

Site Plan Review and Comment

Readington Brewery

Block 76 Lot 5- 937 Route 202

Appl# PB19-010-Preliminary & Final Site Plan

The members of the Environmental Commission reviewed the application. There was a discussion as to why the Environmental Impact Statement was waived. There was concern expressed about odor, light and wastewater from the brewing process. There was also concern about how the stormwater would be managed on the site.

Paul Fox, PE, the applicant's engineer was present. Mr. Fox explained the reason that the applicant requested a waiver for the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) was because the proposal is being constructed on an existing farm field that is tilled every year for growing corn. He further explained that the primary environmental impact is stormwater which is discussed in full detail in the Stormwater Management Report. He described how the stormwater would be managed on the site

and noted that there is no tree removal required for the proposal. He also noted that the lighting will comply with all Township codes. Mr. Fox explained that there will not be a problem with odor due to it being a small operation that will be operating on a strict limited brewery license. He also noted that the closest residential property line is more than 400 feet away. He explained that there will be not be any wastewater generated from the brewing process.

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
12/13/19	Sustainable NJ	Inventory of Township Meadows Flora & Fauna Content	\$10,000		2/14/2020	Awarded
1/1/2018	319(h) Nonpoint Pollution Control	Implement key elements of the 2008 Watershed Protection Plan: Holland Brook School, Bloy Farm & Hillcrest Park	\$300,000		1/1/2018	Awarded
1/3/2020	Roots for Rivers	Tree planting in riparian buffer Bloy Farm 319H	\$7,123		12/13/2019	Awarded
11/29/2019	Community Forestry Stewardship	Any aspect of community tree program	\$10,000-\$20,000	In kind	5/29/2020	Not released
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 9:10 p.m.

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