

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2020**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hendrickson at 7:07 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
Jerry Cook
Todd Terricone
Steve Foster
Susan Masinda
Jeff Charney – joined late

Members Absent

Jonathan Heller

Minutes

Mr. Cook moved, and Mr. Becker seconded, a motion to approve the minutes for August 4, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

None

AOC (Areas of Concern)

None

Correspondence

Received a thank you note from the Historical Preservation committee for the help the Environmental Commission and DPW provided in removing trees at the Woodschurch Cemetery.

The 319h Grants Quarterly report was provided to the members. Mr. Foster stated that the work will be completed by November of 2020. The installation project at Hillcrest has been completed. Mr. Foster was able to observe that after a big storm a couple of weeks ago, both Holland Brook School and Hillcrest took enormous amounts of water with no overflow and drained away within a day leaving just a small amount of water at the base of the detention basin. Other parts of projects associated with this grant have shown improvements in the draining of water to prevent the flooding of some roads.

It was suggested that the success of these projects be written up and submitted to the newspaper so that the township residents and other municipalities can be aware of this work and improvements recognized as a result. Also, a PowerPoint presentation could be created to be displayed on the screen in the lobby of the Municipal Building (once the building is open to the public).

Received a TWA application for the Readington Commons; nothing to comment on this.

New Business

Creation of a Grants Committee

There is a need to have more volunteers to help with the identification, research, and implementation of grants. The new Township Administrator will review any potential new grants to determine if it makes sense from a time and fiscal viewpoint to pursue. Discussion ensued on if a committee is the best way to handle grants. It was mentioned that township administration should be the entity to manage grants. A suggestion was made to re-establish and expand the duties of the Green Team to assist in this area.

Other Business

Community Well Testing Update

A meeting was held to discuss this year's Well Testing Program. It was determined that the Raritan Headwaters Association (RHA) van will be utilized to distribute well tests as well as act as collection sites to allow for social distancing and to accommodate the fact that the municipal building may still be closed to the public. The municipal building parking lot will be used to allow residents to access the RHA van. There will be 4 or 5 dates scheduled to allow residents to participate in well testing. Additionally, virtual meeting(s) could be held to allow residents an opportunity to ask questions about the well testing. It was mentioned that volunteers will be needed on the days the van will be in place at the municipal building to help with traffic control, testing kits delivery and collection, etc. A suggestion was made to reach out to non-well property owners for testing for lead.

Single Use Plastic Ban – Dissemination of Information

The township's passing of the ordinance banning single use plastic got the attention of ANJEC who has asked Chair Hendrickson to participate on a panel to discuss what Readington Township has done at their annual virtual meeting. There is a need to get the information about this ordinance out to the residents and businesses. Typical ways to circulate information include the township website, articles in the newspapers and flyers and/or posters in business windows. An idea to use a sandwich board on CR 523 was also mentioned.

Subcommittee Updates

Tree Subcommittee

Ash Tree/Dead Tree Removal

Requests are coming in to have dead ash trees removed from what is believed to be township property. A tree removal request form was created for residents to use for this issue. The homeowner will need to prove that the trees being requested to be removed are on township property via a survey. This will be applied for any dead tree removal requests.

Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee

Deer Management

A meeting was held on August 31, 2020 to hold the lottery for the individual hunting permits as well as to conduct the mandatory orientation for the hunters. This year there are 20 participants. The subcommittee will be focusing on public outreach to notify residents that

hunting will be taking place on properties throughout the township. Hunting maps are currently on the township website.

Streams & Groundwater Subcommittee

Stream Quality

This subcommittee will be holding a meeting on September 17, 2020. Over 20 projects have been identified that this subcommittee will want to address. A focus will be placed on ways of helping the residents think of clean water collectively. An overview of the stream restoration project on the Holland Brook was provided.

Silver Bit and Spur was discussed. Many organizations have been involved with this project and there are ongoing discussions.

Grants Update

Mr. Becker provided updates the following grants:

1. Rain gardens at the schools – the money would not fund the plant materials. Raritan Headwaters took over this project and the scope that will be introduced to the community is the concept of rain gardens and how to build them.
2. Acquisition of forested properties – This grant doesn't require that there be a contract on a property to purchase; you just have to have a property that there is interest in. Currently, there is no property that meets this criterion.
3. The township was not awarded the grant that would have provided consultant-led assistance to the township administration and township committee to learn how to better communicate with the community.
4. Roots for River grants – both the Bloys Farm and the Holland Brook projects are moving along.
5. There's a few grants involving energy related items that will need to be researched.

Updates on other Items

Tree Permit Update

There was a property inspected which inspired a review to the tree ordinance permit. That review and potential changes are pending.

Website Updates

Chair Hendrickson has provided updated documents on the Spotted Lanternfly and the Emerald Ash Borer for the website.

Stormwater Districts

Mr. Becker provided information to the commission members regarding stormwater districts.

Stormwater Ordinance

Mr. Becker indicated that Readington Township's Stormwater ordinance is out of date. It is recommended that a priority be given to updating this ordinance and it is believed that the

Environmental Commission should take the lead in this initiative. This will be discussed at the Streams and Groundwater Subcommittee.

Malfunctioning Septic Systems

There is a need for public education that all septic systems should be pumped and cleaned every three (3) years. This can potentially be tied into the promotion for the well testing program.

Readington Farms Odor

There is a water treatment plant that is located right behind them and that is potentially where the odor is coming from. It is unsure who owns this water treatment plant. It may be the RLSA or it could be a treatment plant used by Readington Farms. The chair of the Sewer Advisory Committee will be contacted to see if he is aware of what could be causing the odor.

Site Plan Review and Comment

Bishop & Bishop – APPL # PB19-013

The Environmental Commission has no issues with this application.

Site Plan Review and Comment

William Scopetto – APPL # ZB19-014

The Environmental Commission has no issues with this application.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the committee members to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz
Secretary to the Environmental Commission