

**Township of West Milford
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

MINUTES

MARCH 3, 2014

The March 3, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Township of West Milford Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:36 p.m. with a reading of the Legal Notice.

Prior to commencing the meeting, the following Environmental Commission members were administered their oaths of office for their new terms: Andrew Abdul and Jennifer Easterbrook. Gary Oppenheimer was re-appointed but was not present.

ROLL CALL: **Present:** Andrew Abdul, Timothy Dalton, Douglas Ott, Thomas Tamayne, Don Weise, Alternates Jennifer Easterbrook and Lucas Slott, Chairman Stephen Sangle.

Absent: Gary Oppenheimer.

Also Present: Ron Farr, Forestry Consultant, Peter Dolan, NY/NJ Trail Conference, Thalya Reyes, Watershed Ambassador.

Chairman Stephen Sangle requested Luke Slott to sit in for Gary Oppenheimer and advised that a quorum was present to conduct this meeting.

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND STATUS REVIEW

Ron Farr, Certified Forester and grant consultant, provided the following update on the Community Forestry Management Plan and the NNL Reforestation Grant.

NJDEP Green Comm. \$3000.00 Grant for Community Forestry Management Plan: Ron Farr advised that he re-formatted the Draft Community Forestry Management Plan. He has not met with the Forestry Subcommittee, but will meet with them before the next EC meeting in April when the draft is prepared for review. Mr. Farr advised that he must have the Community Forestry Management Plan approved and accepted by the Township before he can submit it to the State.

NJDEP NNL Reforestation Grant - \$620,197.00: Chairman Sangle suggested that Mr. Farr attend a Township Council meeting to get input on the planting plan and suggestions for planting locations for the NNL grant. Mr. Farr commented that he had been contacted by Glenn Wenzel regarding Veterans Park, who requested that some trees be planted on the site. Mr. Farr also advised that the Newark Watershed tree salvaging operation was halted due to the presence of vernal pools and DEP easements that were required, along with the proper approval for removal of the trees, none of which had been issued.

PRESENTATIONS

Peter Dolan – NJ Program Coordinator/NY/NJ Trail Conference – Mr. Dolan reviewed some of the activities of the NY/NJ Trail Conference, including maintenance of 2000 miles of trails in 85 park units, consisting of over 1300 volunteers. He noted that West Milford contains over 120 miles of trails, including the Highlands Trail. Mr. Dolan reported that the Trail Conference installed 12 kiosks on trails in West Milford as part of the Trails Signage Grant project, and plans were being developed for the Long Pond Ironworks Bridge repair project. He also advised that the Trail Conference had a crew training with Ramapo College at the Burnt Meadow Road site for the Tennessee Gas Pipeline, adding that this was a good site for “trail building workshops.” Mr. Dolan reported on a Trail University course that will take place on March 29 & 30 and April 5 & 6 that will include information on trail layout and design, as well as an introduction to trail maintenance and safety. He also advised that the Trail Conference worked with the Land Conservancy of NJ on potential open space land acquisitions that would serve as trail connectors. Commissioner Don Weise commented that Mr. Dolan has become involved in numerous projects during the short time that he has been with the NY/NJ Trail Conference since October 2013. Mr. Dolan stated that he was looking for information on projects that he can pair with grants. Commissioner Doug Ott commented that the focus of Mr. Dolan’s efforts will certainly compliment the work of the Environmental Commission.

Americorps Watershed Ambassador 2013-2014 - Thalya Reyes – Ms. Reyes provided additional information about the scheduled dates for clean up efforts in the area: April 12 & 19 at Stag Hill, Ramapo Mountain, a full day event with lunch provided; April 13, 2014 from 8:30 to 12:30 at Ringwood Manor -

litter clean up; April 20, 2014 from 8:30 to 12:30 – trash clean up; March 13, 2014 at 9:00 am at the Great Falls in Paterson, NJ, a NJDEP press event. Ms. Reyes noted the campaign slogan “Don’t Waste Open Space – Clean Up Illegal Dumping.” She also advised of stream monitoring training for regional BMT’s on March 29, 2014 from 10 to 3 at the Great Swamp Watershed in Chatham, NJ, and remarked that the Commission could get certified if several Commissioners assisted in the monitor training. Commissioner Tim Dalton observed that local testing/monitoring training would provide an opportunity for certification points with the Sustainable Jersey program. Chairman Sangle inquired whether the testing included chemical or pollution testing, and Ms. Reyes responded that she has testing kits for testing chemical indicators. Mr. Ott suggested that Ms. Reyes contact the Township’s Environmental Club at the High School for assistance with the clean up efforts.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW – None.

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND STATUS REVIEW – Cont’d.

2010 ANJEC Smart Growth Planning Grant-Trails Master Plan: Doug Ott reported that a “clean” copy of the information was supposed to be sent to the Commission’s consultant, Joanna Schlegle, for updating. Tim Dalton advised that he was to contact Ms. Schlegle and coordinate the GIS data material for the Trails MP. Mr. Ott suggested that a meeting be arranged to meet with Ms. Schlegle and review the material compiled. Chairman Sangle emphasized the need to provide ANJEC with an update on the plan as soon as possible.

ON GOING BUSINESS

Lakes Committee: Commissioner Andrew Abdul advised that there was no Lakes Committee meeting in February, but at the meeting in January, the Committee mainly discussed geese control at the lakes. Their discussion on geese control included covering the goose eggs in oil and shaking the eggs to destroy the embryo, although they acknowledged that would not address the current population of geese that have taken up residence at the lake properties.

Mr. Abdul reported about a resident who clear cut his property near Forest Hill Park and was alerting the HEPSCD (Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District). Doug Ott commented about a resident on Green Terrace Way who clear cut his property and brought soil in without an approved plan or permits, and noted the major erosion issues that resulted. The Commission discussed the effects of clear cutting without permits, and noted that, although the Township has a staff member designated as the Township Forester, it does not have a DPW Director at the current time. Mr. Ott suggested that if a resident is affected by major erosion issues from tree removal, they should report it to the Township Council if they can’t resolve it through other sources.

Mr. Abdul reported that Ringwood was researching a septic ordinance similar to West Milford’s.

Chairman Sangle reported about the discussion between the Township Council, the Greenwood Lake Commission, and the Environmental Commission, and the request to assist with the pollution and weed issues on Greenwood Lake. Chairman Sangle noted that the Environmental Commission would be willing to work in concert with them to evaluate the BMP’s to keep the pollution at bay. He observed that the GWL Commission has their meetings and discussions, and the Environmental Commission has their own meetings, with little coordination of the efforts to improve the health of Greenwood Lake. Chairman Sangle also advised that Luke Slott volunteered to be a liaison with the Greenwood Lake Commission and will attend meetings and report on algae or weed control harvesting efforts that the EC may be able to assist with. He requested Andy Abdul to work together with Luke Slott as liaisons on the Greenwood Lake Commission. Luke Slott commented that the Council was looking to the Environmental Commission to act as an intermediary. Chairman Sangle tried to contact Eric Hastings, who was re-appointed as one of the Township’s representatives on the GWL Comm., but did not receive a response, so he would give the contact information to Mr. Slott and Mr. Abdul and asked them to contact him ASAP; they are also requested to attend the next GWL Comm. Meeting. Tim Dalton noted that reducing the pollutions to the lake from Belchers Creek should be stressed. Chairman Sangle suggested that Dr. Fred Lubnow from Princeton Hydro be contacted about potential grants that would benefit Greenwood Lake. He also noted that stream testing should be resurrected to determine 1) where the excess nutrients are coming from that contribute to the weed and algae growth, and 2) the best treatment for what currently exists. Thalya Reyes remarked that she

has the means for conducting dissolved oxygen and turbidity testing, and noted that she would be getting lake testing training and will check if the DEP has testing kits for more advanced testing such as fecal coliform. Chairman Sangle noted that if there is a suspicion, initial testing could be initiated. Doug Ott reminded the Commission about canoe trips on Belcher's Creek through a grant they received approximately 10 years ago. Chairman Sangle recommended that testing could be performed before and after the lake. He observed the complexity of the issue by pointing out that the nutrients that go into the lake are absorbed by the weeds and algae, and they actually filter the contaminants, but stressed that it was necessary to achieve an overall balance. He further noted that if all the algae are removed, the sun creates more weeds, and the fish and wildlife need to be protected, adding that there were many factors to be considered for the best methods to keep the lake clean.

Open Space Committee: Chairman Sangle advised that he spoke to the Township Council regarding the Weaver Road property as possible open space acquisition and they were unanimously in favor of the property purchase. He noted that the status of the two land locked properties need to be determined prior to the purchase. Overall, Chairman Sangle reported, the meeting went well and the property fits all three of the goals of the open space funding: historical, recreational and environmental. He also advised that Linda Glosinski of the Land Conservancy was working on several grants for funds for the purchase, but the Township would be responsible for approximately 1/3 of the cost from Open Space funds. Doug Ott commented that it was good that the Township renewed the contract with The Land Conservancy. Chairman Sangle requested that the Weaver Road property be included in the Trails Master Plan, and Mr. Ott replied that it would be included.

Environmental Contamination Issues: Tom Tamayne reported that he was working on re-establishing the spreadsheet on contamination issues with the Health Dept.

Green Team–Sustainable Jersey: Chairman Sangle reported that he had requested Commissioners Jennifer Easterbrook, Luke Slott, Tom Tamayne, and Tim Dalton to be the EC's representatives on the Green Team-Sustainable Subcommittee, with Jennifer Easterbrook at the helm in coordinating the re-certification process. Jennifer Easterbrook advised that she received a packet of re-certification information from the former chair of the subcommittee, Renee Alessio, and that our Watershed Ambassador, Thalya Reyes, has offered to assist with the re-certification process. Ms. Easterbrook noted that the subcommittee was aiming for silver certification with the Sustainable Jersey program. She also remarked that the grant that the Environmental Commission/Sustainable Subcommittee/Green Team has applied for was looking favorable. The grant request contains quotes with a timeline, as well as associated information for the pamphlets and totes that will have the theme "Go Green to Save Green." Distribution of the totes and pamphlets will take place at the Autumn Lights Festival and other community events. Ms. Easterbrook noted that a local vendor was very reasonable with their quote, so they will be able to do two printings of the pamphlets. Chairman Sangle suggested maintenance of septic systems as a topic for the pamphlet, in addition to how wells work, especially for the benefit of the people who move to the Township with no prior knowledge of septic systems and wells. Ms. Easterbrook noted that there were funds to get an additional 500 pamphlets printed on specific information. Ms. Reyes commented that for silver certification, the Township must have two more categories, as well as review the points and updated initiatives. Ms. Easterbrook advised that once she is able to log in to the site, she will be able to ascertain what is required.

NEW OR CURRENT BUSINESS

- Chairman Sangle reported that the Township Council has requested a volunteer to be the second municipal representative on the Greenwood Lake Commission. The Secretary advised that resident Paul Zarillo may have been appointed to the position.
- Tim Dalton noted that ANJEC has training on Environmental Commission fundamentals and recommended that new members attend the session. He noted that he may attend an upcoming session in Egg Harbor on stormwater training and would carpool with another commissioner.

MINUTES

The Minutes for the December 9, 2014 Environmental Commission meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Tom Tamayne and a second by Doug Ott.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – *The following correspondence was reviewed by the Commission and filed:*

Highlands Water Protection And Planning Act Correspondence

1. Letter from the NJDEP, dated February 12, 2014, to the Township of West Milford, regarding a Highlands Pre-Application Meeting that was held to review a proposed access driveway to the West Milford Recycling Center at Block 6002; Lots 18.01 and 28.03, advising that a Highlands Applicability Determination (HAD) must be submitted to verify if an exemption was applicable, and if exempt, a Highlands Preservation Area Approval (HPAA) would not be required. The NJDEP also advised that Freshwater Wetlands and Flood Hazard Area approvals would be necessary for the access driveway, and they recommended that the Township pursue alternative solutions to lessen the disturbance, and would be available to meet with the Township to explore alternatives.
2. Notification received February 2, 2014 from the Borough of Ringwood of an Ordinance #2014-1 to amend and supplement the revised general ordinances of the Borough of Ringwood by adding Chapter XLI entitled "Highlands Area Exemption" to regulate the manner in which the Borough may approve applications that are exempt from Highlands regulations.

NJ Department of Environmental Protection Correspondence

1. Notification dated January 9, 2014 from the NJDEP advising that the Class B Recycling Center General Approval was renewed for Skytop Recycling, Inc., 80 Airport Road, Block 6002; Lot 34, effective January 9, 2014 to January 1, 2019.
2. Copy of the New Jersey Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2013-2019, received February 19, 2014 from the NJDEP Historic Preservation Office.
3. Letter from the NJDEP, dated February 21, 2014, to the Pinecliff Lake Community Club regarding the Pinecliff Lake Dam (File No. 22-47) advising that per the 2012 Regular Inspection Report, submitted March 15, 2013, the dam was found to be in satisfactory condition with minor repairs and maintenance to be implemented within six months of this correspondence. Also advising that Class I dams require regular inspections every two years and a formal inspection every 6 years, the later of which is due by the end of 2014, as well as an updated Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and inspection checklist from the 2003 Operations & Maintenance Manual.
4. Letter from the NJDEP, dated February 21, 2014, to the Lake Lookover Property Owners Assoc. regarding the Lake Lookover Dam (File No. 22-84) advising that, based on the 2013 Inspection Report, submitted November 14, 2013, the dam was found to be in satisfactory condition with maintenance items recommended, to be implemented within six months of this correspondence. Also advising that an inspection report would be due within 2 years.
5. Letter from the NJDEP, dated February 12, 2014, to Passaic County regarding the Apschawa Main Dam (File No. 22-1) and the Apschawa Auxiliary Dam ((File No. 22-314), advising that the 2014 Inspection Report finds the dams to be in satisfactory condition with maintenance to be completed by May 21, 2014, and the next inspection performed by January 16, 2016. Also advising that the low-level outlet valves should be operated two to four times per year to prevent siltation of the inlet, control corrosion, and to insure operability of the valves, and requesting an electronic version of the EAP by March 31, 2014.
6. Notice from the NJDEP, dated February 11, 2014, to Chelsea Senior Residences, advising of a deficiency in the Freshwater Wetlands LOI and Transition Area Averaging Plan Application, and requesting verification of prior freshwater wetlands permits for the existing development, or requiring an amendment to the application to address all regulated activities, existing and proposed. In addition, the applicant is required to reassess the site to quantify and depict all freshwater wetlands and wetland transition area disturbances and apply for appropriate approvals required for the development, and if not received within 30 days, the application would be cancelled and referred for NJDEP enforcement.

Correspondence

1. Certification of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, dated January 14, 2014, received from the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District for the proposed Camp Hope Swimming Pool and Spray Park at 1792 Union Valley Road, Block 6402; Lot 4.

2. Notice from the Passaic County Planning Board, dated January 27, 2014, regarding Twins Realty Group, Block 3906; Lots 9 & 10 and Block 6002; Lot 34.01, 937 Burnt Meadow Road, advising that revised plans indicating and labeling the flood plain line on the site plan and grading plan must be received before the plan will be considered for unconditional approval.

3. Copy of the Draft Passaic County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan received on February 21, 2014, with correspondence from the Passaic County Planning Dept. advising that a Public Hearing will be held on this matter on March 20, 2014 at 5:00 pm at the Passaic County Planning Dept., with all comments to be submitted by April 19, 2014.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Environmental Commission, the March 3, 2014 meeting was **adjourned** at **9:21 p.m.** on a **motion** by Tim Dalton and a **second** by Don Weise.

Approved: July 7, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya E. Cubby, Secretary