

**Township of West Milford
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

MINUTES

March 7, 2022

Main Meeting Room

The March 7, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Township of West Milford Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairman Stephen Sangle beginning at 7:00 pm with a reading of the Legal Notice.

ROLL CALL

Present: James Lyons, James Rogers, Thomas Tamayne, Douglas Trainor, Don Weise, Chairman Stephen Sangle.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Councilwoman Marilyn Lichtenberg.

Bubbling Springs – Potential Trails & Boardwalk & ANJEC 2022 Open Space Stewardship Projects Grant – Dan Kochakji, Parks & Recreation Director, was present to discuss a collaborative effort with the Environmental Commission for a trail project at Bubbling Springs. Chairman Sangle had recommended that the ANJEC 2022 OSS grant be submitted to request 1500. in funds for contracting with a landscape architect to prepare plans for an environmental and educational walkway at Bubbling Springs. The other option was to use the funds in the grant, if awarded, to purchase signage if the project can receive additional funding from other sources. Mr. Kochakji reviewed the amenities at the Bubbling Springs complex for the Commission, noting that there are two ballfields, a camp facility, swimming pool, lake, concession stands and bandstand, adding that the lower lake has been overtaken by phragmites. He advised that a meeting was held with the Commission Chair at the site, and with the area containing varied vegetation and wildlife, a dedicated walkway to the lower pond with educational signage would be a benefit to the day camp, with a nature walk incorporated into the plan. He commented that there is a grant that is available for an ADA accessible fishing pier. The ANJEC grant for 1500. max would be for the services of an architect to prepare a plan, but the wetlands at the site will be a challenge. Chairman Sangle suggested that stone aggregate be used for the walkway. The Commission discussed various elements of the grant project including obtaining a quote for landscape architect services, submission of the grant, access to building materials and labor, repair of a deteriorating bridge at the site, and the ample parking that is present for visitors to the site. Don Weise offered assistance with the trails. The Commission discussed maintenance and Chairman Sangle suggested that open space funds may be available for materials for maintenance. Mr. Kochakji suggested that the DPW and scout groups may be able to assist with the trail maintenance. He will reach out to the Engineering Dept for a sample packet for soliciting quotes for this type of project and Jim Rogers will assist with preparation of the ANJEC grant draft.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

ABDD LLC (Dunkin Donuts)

Minor Site Plan #PB-01-22-01

Block 1521 Union Valley Road; VC Zone

Seeking: Minor Site Plan approval for exterior façade improvement, signage, including building mounted sign, replace a freestanding stand, directional sign, and minor site improvements.

Subsequent to a review of this Planning Board, the Commission made the following comments:

- The Commission noted that the proposed signs near the building will be interior lit, so lighting affecting adjacent properties shouldn't be an issue, and the sign facing out to Union Valley Road does not appear to be a lighted sign.
- The changes to directional signage should help with traffic issues on the site.
- The Commission noted that the number of parking spaces will be maintained.
- One section of the plans for the overhang indicated a decrease in impervious surface, and another section indicated a slight increase, but it did not appear to pose any issues.
- This minor site plan application for exterior renovations to an existing Dunkin Donuts with a drive thru facility did not seem to present any obvious environmental concerns.

ON GOING BUSINESS

Belchers Creek Testing: Former Commissioner Dave Ofshinsky turned over the spread sheet for the Belchers Creek test results to Doug Trainor to maintain. Three sample were taken in the last two months, but several of the members had difficulty getting to the sites during the colder months. Chairman Sangle noted that the testing can be done by other volunteers in addition to the Commissioners.

Community Forestry Mgt. Plan: AAR-Annual Accomplish Report–CEU's required for 2020 & 21 – The Commission will schedule a presentation so that the CEU's required for the CFMP will be available. Mr. Lyons had advised previously that he has a forestry degree.

NNL Reforestation Grant: Chairman Sangle advised that the Administrator had been sent the final close out report on the NNL Reforestation Grant and the recommendation by the Commission to enlist the services of a certified forester for the Township. Bids were supposed to be obtained for tree replacement. No update at this time.

Greenwood Lake Bi-State Commission: Chairman Sangle noted that Doug Trainor had been requested to attend the meetings of the GWL Bi-State Commission and report back to the Environmental Commission. No report was available for this meeting.

Lakes Committee: Jim Rogers advised that the Lakes Committee will meet on March 21, 2022. Their guest speaker will be from the Garden Center in Bloomingdale. Doug Trainor reported that he and Jim Rogers are assisting them with the testing of the various lakes for their ongoing study.

Open Space Committee: Don Weise approached the Highlands Coalition and the NJ Conservation Foundation for a quote for services since The Land Conservancy would be unable to assist the Commission/Township with their plans for open space matters related to the Greenway Plan. He was also in contact with a Dr. Bacorino who heads up a citizen science team and strike force, and he will try to arrange a presentation for the Commission on invasive species. He will forward the information to the Commission Secretary. Marilyn Lichtenberg noted that there is an ordinance to increase open space funding and 200,000 is available. She also reported that the Recycling Committee is working on the storm drain project to identify drains on each street, but is not sure that they will all be numbered. Chairman Sangle observed that Jim Rogers was instrumental in getting this initiative to move forward and worked with the DPW to coordinate and bring awareness to the issue.

Environmental Contamination Issues: Tom Tamayne reviewed the environmental contamination notices received by the Commission.

Environmental Boardwalk: Chairman Sangle gave the contact information to Tom Tamayne for the company who is contracted for Bubbling Springs to control the phragmites.

They employ raking where accessible, and treatment for weeds to inhibit future growth. Mr. Tamayne noted that if the weeds are treated, it may also kill off native plants. As for reapiir work on the Boardwalk, Chairman Sangle suggested that open space funds may be considered.

NEW OR CURRENT BUSINESS

Greenway Project: Chairman Sangle advised that he, Jim Lyons, Don Weise, and Chris Garcia (Planning Board Chairman) met to discuss concepts for a greenway expansion project that would provide increased tourism opportunities. They discussed improving the existing trails, hiking options, kayaking access on Belchers Creek, and a possible gondola for Bearfort Mt. They will need sketches and designs. As for the concept, Chairman Sangle noted the difficulty in obtaining easements for some of the properties not publically owned along the Belchers Creek. They will continue to meet once a month to review plans and options. Mr. Lyons advised that he is chair of the Economic Development Commission and would like to identify the two areas that the two commissions have shared views. Chairman Sangle advised that the focus needs to be on what can be accomplished, utilizing the funds from Open Space for realistic projects in the next two years. Mr. Lyons recommended that the funds be used for recreation and to highlight the amenities in the Township. The Commission discussed various options for Brown's Point and the former bowling alley for parking. The Commission concurred that the Environmental Commission, Economic Development Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission could meet quarterly to share ideas on what they are doing and how they can combine their efforts. The meetings can take place at 6 pm prior to the regular EC meetings. This will be discussed further.

MINUTES

The minutes from the February 7, 2022 Environmental Commission meeting were approved on a **motion** by Don Weise with a **second** by Doug Trainor.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act Correspondence

1. Notice from Michael Lorenz on behalf of Suez Water NJ, dated Feb. 4, 2022, advising that an application is being submitted to the NJDEP regarding a HAD (Highlands Applicability Determination) for Block 9401; Lot 2, Macopin Road and Relda Avenue, requesting Exemption #11 for the construction of a new 9'8" x 20'8" addition to an existing well and treatment building for the installation of new Per and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) treatment required to maintain drinking water quality standards for the public. Also included in the project if an expansion of the existing gravel drive for the new addition, and restore 2100 SF of unused gravel driveway to its natural state.
2. Highlands Determination – Exemption #11, WQMP-Not Addressed, dated Feb 22, 2022 received from the NJDEP regarding B 4601; L 8, B 6002; L33, 39.02, 44.04, for upgrades to an existing compressor station, specifically the construction of an underground to overhead transition structure within the existing ROW on Burnt Meadow Road.

NJ Department of Environmental Protection Correspondence

1. Notice dated Feb 23, 2022 of an application being submitted to NJDEP for a Highlands Applicability Determination regarding SUEZ Water NJ – Olde Milford Wells No 5 & 6 – PFAS Treatment.
2. Notice dated Feb 1, 2022 received from Richard Wostbrock & Associates regarding an application being submitted to the NJDEP regarding 12 Newton Drive, Block 12305; Lot 21 for

a FW GP #24 for the construction of an ISDS for greywater waste-water in a two bedroom dwelling.

3. Suspected Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification, NJDEP #22-03-05-1125-01, received for 427 Warwick Tpk, B 406; L 2, regarding removal of one 550 gal UST, with clean-up pending.

Miscellaneous

1. Volunteer of the Year Program (April 20, 2022) - Request for nominees.
2. ANJEC – Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions Virtual Sessions.
3. USDA Forest Service 2022 Challenge Cost Share Grant Program NFA – Deadline 04-08-22
4. ANJEC News March 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Sara and Wayne Warren, 218 Ridge Road, expressed concern about an adjacent neighbor (Intracoastal Restoration?) clearing 9 lots and possible encroachment of the soil, rocks, bricks and other debris onto their property from the material that is being trucked to the site as fill. She noted that there are soil erosion issues, and stormwater runoff, full of sediment, is extensive. They have reported the issues to the Building Dept., but the owner agrees to comply and then continues with their activities. The Warrens are concerned about the run off affecting the wetlands transition zone, and stated that there are vernal pools that have been compromised by the construction.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Sangle advised that the next Environmental Commission meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2022. With no further business to come before the Environmental Commission, the March 7, 2022 regular meeting was **adjourned** at 8:45 p.m. on a **motion** by Doug Trainor and a **second** by Tom Tamayne.

Approved: April 4, 2022

Respectfully submitted by

Tonya E. Cubby, Secretary