

Franklin Township Environmental Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2008

Attendees: Arnold Schmidt (Chair), David Triggs, Barbara Beringer, Dr. Mike Ricketts, Ernesto Roman, Dr. Ted Chase, Dianne Pydeski, John Clyde

Absent: Michael Ricketts

The meeting was called to order at 8:14 PM, after the review of 13 site plans. The Sunshine Law notice was read, and the roll was called. The minutes of the Dec. 10 meeting, prepared by D. Triggs and revised by A. Schmidt and A. Vernick, were approved, with the further revision that D. Pydeski *was* present.

A. Schmidt has not prepared a letter of submission for the Environmental Survey to the Township Council, and E. Roman has not made the changes suggested at the last meeting. The deadline for the next township newsletter is Feb. 1; will we submit the survey results for publication? We should first send the survey to the Council and Planning Board.

Our 2008 calendar is posted on the township website.

The Bennetts/Veronica development has been removed from the township Fair Share Plan and Master Plan by the Planning Board and Council.

No news on the Environmental Resource Inventory. John Loos has sent up-to-date maps and pictures to Amy Greene Associates.

John Clyde reported that at its December meeting the Trails Committee adopted a trails plan for discussion and comment. There remains significant disagreement concerning the route of the trail on or paralleling the rail bed between Amwell Rd. and Elizabeth Ave. (Toto-Gierlich open space/Memorial Forest). The railbed from S. Middlebush Rd. is not ready for prime time; the committee is looking at an alternative route farther south (Six Mile Run state lands and Scott farm). A vegetative buffer will be restored on the rail bed. At most there will be a single file walking trail along the southern border of this strip, depending on exactly how far from the rail bed a survey shows this to be. The proposed path west of Amwell Rd. would run north of the rail bed, and at a lower level, as far as the Bening property. The majority would continue the trail westward along the rail bed to Elizabeth Ave.; a minority would put the trail in the woods, above the rail bed, as much as possible, for better neighbor relations. The public believed, erroneously, that a bike lane on Elizabeth Ave. would entail removal of the Belgian block curbing installed there by Somerset County. J. Clyde will report on this plan to the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Planning Board, the Agricultural Advisory Committee, and a subcommittee of the Council. He would like to report in detail to the

Environmental Commission at its first meeting in February, after we have read the report and visited the site. Saturday, Jan. 19, was tentatively selected for a site visit, 10 AM (weather permitting), meet at Grannys Deli on Railroad Ave. T. Chase will identify a date for the trails report to be discussed by the Planning Board.

The Council is scheduled to make appointments to the Environmental Commission at its Jan. 8 meeting. The number of alternates is fixed by statute at two; but commissions can establish associate members, student members, etc. A. Vernick will contact ANJEC for a model ordinance establishing associate members.

The well water meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 10, in the Council chambers. Doug Vornlocker, who was expected to present general well matters, has been promoted to assistant director of Somerset County Hazmat. Dave Triggs will confirm whether he or someone else will make this presentation. Steve Spayd may bring bottles for samples or may expect us to. We need to coordinate with Michele Samara-Timm of the Health Department concerning this.

T. Chase presented a draft letter to the Sewerage Authority and Public Works concerning a clean-up of Mile Run. It was suggested to add Mayor Levine and Paul Stevens, chair of the Sewerage Authority, to those to be sent copies of the letter.

A. Schmidt presented ANJECs call for 2008 planning grant applications. However, we will not apply while we are working on our 2007-funded Natural Resource Inventory.

T. Chase presented a request from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance for letters to the executive director of the Pinelands Commission, in support of listing all plant species of concern (per NJ Natural Heritage listing) as protected in the Pinelands.

Guest J. Walker reported that the Board of Education has published a call for farming their land on Claremont Ave., purchased several years ago as a future school site. Rutgers will teach another class on the new Flood Hazard rules on March 6. He showed a flyer from Somerset County, Solutions to Stormwater Pollution, which he will copy and have the copies sent to the township clerks office. He presented a packet of news items, notably an article on the Higgins Farm and Higgins Disposal sites, with the news being that the corporations NCH and FMC, which generated much of the waste at these sites, have agreed to pay \$14 million and \$16.7 million respectively toward the clean-ups

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.