

Franklin Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM, and the Sunshine Law notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Biercz, J. Clyde (arrived 7:07), C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski, A. Schmidt, A. Vernick, and P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. Absent: D. Triggs.

Chair's report: A. Vernick noted the discussion, for the minutes, of the current name of A. McBride's organization; it is now the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Game having been dropped. He and C. MacIvor attended a workshop at Duke Farms on deer management. In 1998, after years of winter feeding, the deer population density at Duke Farms was 300/sq. mile; by management it has been brought down to 20/sq. mi. The effect of high deer populations is to eliminate the understory in forests, including young trees, endangering the existence of the forest, although deer are primarily creatures of edges, are comfortable in suburbanized New Jersey. The only solution is controlled hunting, focusing on does; but hunters are aging, younger people are not interested. Franklin has a controlled hunting program on our open space, though with not quite as much data collection as recommended at the workshop.

A. Vernick also received an invitation (with an appeal for donations) from the Raritan Headwaters Association, to participate in a watershed-wide stream clean-up on April 19. J. Clyde suggested that this year's stream clean-up focus, for the third time, on the lower reaches of Seeley's Brook, by the I-HOP and Stop & Shop.

The minutes of Nov. 4 were approved. Nothing new at the web site.

Four plans were reviewed, including revised plans for the proposed Tabernacle Church on Cedar Grove Lane and Como Drive. We thank Mark Healey for the summary of changes in the plan, which considerably improve it.

Sustainable Jersey: our recertification at the Bronze level will be formally awarded, to the mayor, at the Sustainable Jersey luncheon tomorrow {Nov. 19} in Atlantic City.

The video of the community gardens should be posted on Channel 29 by next week.

C. MacIvor relayed a suggestion by a landscape gardening contractor that the township should have guidelines, at least, for landscape planting – he does not plant within 6 feet of foundations. Too many landscaping plans fail to take into account the eventual growth of shrubs. The Commission felt it would be too restrictive to set landscaping planning in an ordinance, guidelines were the most we should do.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

