

# Environmental Commission

## Thursday, August 27, 2020

### Special Meeting

### Minutes

**\*THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC\***

## Call to Order

7:53pm

### Attendance

#### **PRESENT-**

Nancy Pergament- Chairwoman  
 Thomas Colwell- Full Member  
 Steven Isaacson- Full Member  
 Krishna Rege- Alternate #1  
 Mordechai Feibish- Alternate #2

#### **ABSENT-**

Sophie Heymann- Full Member  
 Miriam Lockhart- Full Member  
 Grace Whitney- Full Member  
 Councilman Scott Devlin- Full Member  
 Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Associate Member  
 Ethel Abrams- Associate Member

### Open to Public

- Paul Weissman (21 Mc Cain Court);
- forthcoming renegotiated/new lease between existing or future caretaker/resident of Mac Bain Farm (John Mc Caffrey or his replacement) and Borough will include shift of responsibilities relating to administration and enforcement of lease provisions from Commission to Borough Administrator;  
**ACTION-** Mr. Colwell will verify with Borough Attorney if discussions of ad hoc committee organized by Mayor John Glidden to advise Governing Body on caretaker's lease drafting are for public consumption;

### Minutes

- minutes for August 13, 2020 Meeting have not been completed;
- **ACTION-** Commission will determine if change of format in which minutes are prepared (from quasi-transcribed to abridged) is warranted;

### Treasurer's Report

- 2020 Operating Budget Subaccount Balances: Meetings/Dues (~\$225.00); Miscellaneous (\$750.00); Secretarial Support (\$720.00); Mac Bain Farm (~\$475.00); Harvest/Fall Festival (\$1,500.00); Cleanup Day (\$400.00 including customary \$300.00 Bergen County grant);
- **ACTION-** Mr. Colwell will confirm receipt of purchased tarp to be draped over pergola located at Mac Bain Farm to serve as source of shade for volunteers and visitors alike;
- **ACTION-** Commission will determine how to spend higher than usual reserves in 2020 Operating Budget given impact of Pandemic;

## Committee Reports

### Executive

(\*Leader\*- Colwell; w/ Pergament & Devlin)

- Governing Body authorized Borough Attorney to engage Mr. Mc Caffrey on probationary short-term lease expiring December 31, 2021 to evaluate his performance under renegotiated lease with ad hoc committee and Borough's request for proposals (RFP) soliciting new caretaker candidates remaining in place (previous 10-year lease expired on July 31, 2020 with extension to allow for negotiations expiring on September 30, 2020);
- caretaker candidates responding to RFP should be interviewed by Commission for purposes of farm operations (not administration and enforcement of lease provisions);
- Mac Bain Farm should receive additional protection from future development by having parcel rezoned from District 1 (Residential A) to District 7 (Conservation), included in Green Acres Program administered by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, etc. prior to signing renegotiated/new caretaker lease;
- **ACTION**- Mr. Isaacson will continue to lobby Governing Body on preservation status for Farm given mandate of ad hoc committee is related to caretaker lease only;
- **ACTION**- Committee will ask ad hoc committee if short-term lease option is merely stalling tactic for Borough to ultimately replace Mr. Mc Caffrey;

### **Mac Bain Farm Operations**

(\*Leader\*- Lockhart; w/ Heymann, Rege & Bouton-Goldberg)

- 335 households are registered with Farm;
- **ACTION**- Committee will continue to monitor new Farm registrants, daily visitation counts, etc. to adjust volunteer staffing needs;
- **ACTION**- Committee will convene immediately following Farm closing for winter in October to evaluate how to improve upon 2020 season;

### **Mac Bain Farm Property**

(\*Leader\*- Pergament; w/ Colwell & Feibish)

- rehabilitation of dollhouse (Eagle Scout candidate project) is underway with reinforcement of foundation and installation of stone pavers around perimeter completed;
- **ACTION**- Mr. Colwell will contact Dimick Fence Co. to revise estimate (currently at ~\$3,200.00 to perform overall fence maintenance) to reflect solely repair to tree-damaged fencing located in southwestern corner and inquire with Borough if said repair is covered under its insurance policy;

### **Events & Publicity**

(\*Leader\*- Whitney; w/ Isaacson, Lockhart & Bouton-Goldberg)

- consensus of Commission is to have scaled-back Harvest Festival in light of Pandemic with following options being considered: walking tour of Mac Bain Farm for groups of 6 to 10 people to showcase history of farmland and residence on-site or drive-through version of such (usual congregation of attendees making make s'mores at fire pit and pumpkin decorating at table is prohibited); distribution of Halloween treats (pumpkins, coloring books, packaged candy, etc.) directly to homes of Farm registrants; distribution of Halloween treats to general public from central location;
- **ACTION**- Committee will obtain approval for logistics of Festival from Office of Emergency Management, contact Lupardi's Nursery, Inc., which is opting not to host autumn event this year, to order pumpkins and plan potential event co-sponsored by Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and Improvement Commission celebrating spring/planting season;

### **Trails & Passive Parks**

(\*Leader\*- Isaacson; w/ Heymann, Rege & Bouton-Goldberg)

- Borough-wide Cleaning Effort (or Call to Action Day as alternative due to Pandemic) could include trails to make public aware of their existence;
- **ACTION**- Mr. Isaacson will contact Department of Public Works to provide trail/boardwalk maintenance and cleaning of trail signage as needed so long as pathways can accommodate its equipment;

### **Education & Advocacy**

(\*Leader\*- Heymann; w/ Lockhart, Whitney & Abrams)

- community-building initiatives (unrelated to Mac Bain Farm) such as recycling, sustainability, honey bees and invasive species should be spearheaded by Commission to bridge generations;

- Commission should post additional links onto Borough website to educate public on environmental issues thereby negating mailings and printing of brochures;
- Commission should perform team-building activities with its members to better acquaint themselves;
- **ACTION**- Ms. Rege will research potential for installing birdhouses throughout trail system;
- **ACTION**- Mr. Colwell will contact Nicholas Shapiro (3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher employed with Hillside Elementary School) about setting up online lecture series including William Dahle (Superintendent of Public Works) speaking on storm water management issues, Raymond Cywinski (former Mayor of Borough of Demarest and former Tree Expert for Borough of Closter) speaking on trees, etc.;

### **Plan Review, Environmental Notification & Contaminated Sites**

(\*Leader\*- Colwell; w/ Isaacson & Feibish)

- 93 Piermont Road (Planning Board application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving construction of new 1-family house)- Commission had no comments;
- **ACTION**- Mr. Feibish will draft memo asking Planning Board for guidance on what its scope of plan review should be when it is requested to comment on applications taking into account its chairperson (Mark Maddaloni) is employed with United States Environmental Protection Agency;

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## **New Business**

- Commission received following correspondence from Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions: bill passed by New Jersey Legislature regarding environmental justice (condemnation of loading up drains in poor/urban communities) is pending signature into law by Governor Phil Murphy; training webinar on storm water management is slated for September 9, 2020;
- **ACTION**- Commission will ask Historic Preservation Commission if it wants to handle oversight of landmark tree inventory;
- **ACTION**- Chairwoman Pergament will ask Sophia Suarez (high school student wishing to join Commission) if she wants to assist in oversight of landmark tree inventory including signage, mapping tree locations, etc.;

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## **Liaison Reports**

### **Governing Body**

(\*Liaison\*- Devlin)

- report was not given;

### **Planning Board**

(\*Liaison\*- Heymann)

- report was not given;

### **Shade Tree Commission**

(\*Liaison\*- Pergament)

- report was not given;

### **Historic Preservation Commission**

(\*Liaison\*- Bouton-Goldberg)

- report was not given;

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## **Adjournment**

9:52pm