

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

January 13, 2022

Meeting Minutes

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

CALL TO ORDER

- 7:37pm;

2022 REORGANIZATION

- Sophie Heymann (Reappointed as Full Member/New 3-Year Term Expiring December 31, 2024);
- Miriam Lockhart (Reappointed as Full Member/New 3-Year Term Expiring December 31, 2024);
- Cynthia Cole (Appointed as Full Member/Existing 3-Year Term Expiring December 31, 2023);

ATTENDANCE

Present

- Mayor John Glidden- Acting Chairperson;
- Steven Isaacson- Full Member;
- Miriam Lockhart- Full Member;
- Sophie Heymann- Full Member;
- Councilman Scott Devlin- Full Member;
- Mordechai Feibish- Full Member;
- Cynthia Cole- Full Member;

Absent

- Krishna Rege- Full Member;
- VACANT- Alternate #1;
- VACANT- Alternate #2;

OPEN TO PUBLIC

- public questions and/or comments were not presented;

MINUTES

- vote on minutes for August 12, 2021 Meeting was not conducted;

TREASURER'S REPORT

- 2022 *TEMPORARY* Operating Budget Subaccount Balances: Meeting/Dues (\$0.00) Miscellaneous (\$2,000.00); Secretarial Support (\$0.00); Fall Festival (\$0.00); Earth Day (\$0.00); Cleanup Day (\$0.00); Passive Parks (\$0.00);
- Governing Body approved temporary budget (typically equating to 26.25% of prior year's adopted appropriations) with municipal budget anticipated to be introduced by March (Commission's 2021 operating budget was \$6,540.00);
- **ACTION**- Mayor Glidden will inquire with Borough Administrator (Erik Lenander) on status of \$2,000.00 in open space funds allocated in 2021 for trail maintenance which ultimately was performed by Department of Public Works in lieu of private vendor without Commission's approval;

- **ACTION**- Commission members will formulate requests to include in 2022 operating budget and open space funds proposal ahead of Commission's February 10, 2022 Meeting to allow for refinement by Borough administration;
- **ACTION**- Councilman Devlin will circulate last year's adopted appropriations to assist in 2022 budget preparation;
- **VOTE**- motion was made by Councilman Devlin and seconded by Ms. Lockhart to have Commission subscribe to annual Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) membership for 7 recipients at cost of \$375.00 which includes both publications and in-person/webinar sessions (motion passed unanimously);

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ordinance

(*Leader*- Devlin; w/ Lockhart)

- Borough continues to conduct proceedings of its various bodies virtually due to Pandemic with exception being Governing Body whereby solely Mayor Glidden and certain Borough professionals and staff members are in-person at Borough Hall while transmitting remotely;
- **ACTION**- Commission members will suggest candidates to fill vacant Alternate #'s 1 and 2 positions;

Events

(*Leader*- Rege; w/ Isaacson)

- report was not given;

Trails & Passive Parks

(*Leader*- Isaacson; w/ Heymann & Rege)

- report was not given;

Education, Advocacy & Publicity

(*Leader*- Heymann; w/ Lockhart)

- report was not given;

Plan Review, Environmental Notifications & Contaminated Sites

(*Leader*- Feibish; w/ Isaacson)

- site plan submitted in connection with 185 Closter Dock Road, of which contract purchaser is requesting relief from condition of approval required by Zoning Board of Adjustment when it approved contractor's yard requiring property owner to reside in 1-family house, does not depict 4 existing trees;
- **ACTION**- Ms. Lockhart will collect feedback from Commission members to craft administrative reports requested by Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment moving forward;

NEW BUSINESS

- 2 new Committees are warranted to replace Mac Bain Farm Operations Committee and Mac Bain Farm Property Committee which became defunct last year with Commission relinquishing jurisdiction over said farmland;
- proposed Healthy Yards Committee would spearhead pollinator-friendly practices, reducing pesticide/herbicide usage, promoting native plantings, encouraging electric-powered landscaping equipment, etc. while proposed Green Government Committee would advise Borough on installing electric vehicle charging stations and other eco-friendly purchases;
- Commission should engage Planning Board on promoting sustainability beyond providing administrative reports on land use applications when requested (formation of site plan review advisory committee mirroring body established by Borough of Princeton could curtail forthcoming high-density residential and non-residential construction projects);
- ANJEC provides assistance to municipalities with respect to plan review techniques and designs' impact on environmental factors;
- environmental assessments are necessary especially when use of parcel is changing from industrial

- to residential or education use;
- Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment should require applicants to design within parameters of Borough's Master Plan;
- **ACTION**- Ms. Lockhart will distribute her proposals for 2 new Committees in greater detail and solicit Commission's input;

LIAISON REPORTS

Governing Body

(*Liaison*- Devlin)

- Governing Body recently adopted amendments to Chapter 134 of Borough Code which regulate construction noise (equipment cannot exceed certain decibel reading) and limit when construction can be performed to weekdays and reduced hours on Saturdays (prohibition altogether on Sundays) to be enforced by Police Department;
- Governing Body recently adopted amendment to Chapter 181 of Borough Code enabling Building Department to penalize tree service providers in lieu of property owners for unauthorized tree removal;

Planning Board

(*Liaison*- Heymann)

- report was not given;

Shade Tree Commission

(*Liaison*- Lockhart)

- Borough recently obtained \$30,000.00 grant from New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program, \$7,500.00 of which Borough must match in funds and labor, and will be utilized for inventorying street trees (Commission is preparing request for professionals (RFP) to identify qualified vendors);
- Commission recently held fall foliage photography contest (winner's depictions are on display at Closter Public Library);

ADJOURNMENT

- 8:38pm;