



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

For the regular meeting of
Tuesday, April 16, 2019

- * The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Nora Sirbaugh.

Statement of Compliance & Roll Call

Members present: Rex Parker, Jim Gambino, George Kerr, Mike Aucott, Ray Nichols,
Bill Washburn and Nora Sirbaugh

Members absent: Andrew Plunkett, Vanessa Sandom

Also present: Mark Kataryniak - Twp Administrative Officer

Michael Ruger - Twp Committee Liaison (8:00 pm +/-)

Members of the Public present: Lia Mastropolo, Paul Kenny, Joann Held

Add Agenda Item

Bill motioned to add a discussion item under New Business called Street Tree Pruning. All were in favor.

Minutes for Approval

The February 19, 2019 draft minutes were approved with no changes – Motion, Mike; 2nd Bill; Abstain – Rex, Ray

The March 19, 2019 draft minutes were also approved with no changes – Motion, Mike; 2nd Bill; Abstain – George, Ray

Action: Jim will forward these minutes to Mark for posting on the Township website.

Recycling discussion with Green Team

Joann Held joined us to discuss some current issues with Mercer County's curbside recycling program and improvements we can try to implement, beginning with education.

- * reduce, reuse, recycle
- * keep contaminated items out of the recycling bucket(s)
- * merge forces at community events
- * connect community with recycling info/tools

Paul Kenny pointed out there is a video of the recycling operation on the county's website. Mark informed us of a link to the county's "recycling coach" under the public works section on the township's website.

Action: We have invited the Mercer County Improvement Authority's Recycling Director to come speak to us at our next meeting, which will be held as a public forum in the municipal building's auditorium.

Zoning Board Application Review

Case No. 2019-03: **Sutherland Portico**
Block 67, Lot 15; 103 Search Avenue; R-100 Zoning District
Front Yard Setback Variance

We reviewed and discussed the application with Mark and have no environmental concerns.

Planning Board Application Reviews

1. BMS Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Block 46, Lot 8.01, 311 Pennington-Rocky Hill Road, RO-1 Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Site Plan w/Variance

We reviewed and discussed the application with Mark and have no environmental concerns.

2. Gillespie:

Block 29, Lot 11, 131 Harbourton-Woodsville Road, MRC Zoning District
Minor Subdivision w/Variance

We reviewed and discussed the application with Mark and have no environmental concerns. However, we do note that approval of the proposed subdivision will result in a non-conforming residential lot of 10.08 acres in the MRC Zone where the required minimum sized lot is 14 acres.

Action: Jim will prepare and send our review comments via memo to Mark to post with these applications on the Township website.

Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects

A. Twp Committee Liaison Report

Recycling - Michael suggested:

- * Having a recycling info page in our 2020 Township Calendar.
- * Creating a spot on the Township's TV channel to promote the "reduce, reuse, recycle" concept.
- * Instructing recycle pickup persons to not empty recycle buckets that have visible non-recyclable materials in them (i.e. plastic bags).
- * Having a township worksession.
- * Including recycling info in the Township Newsletter.

The Carbon Fee Resolution was passed unanimously by the Twp. Committee.

The township is reconsidering energy aggregation for residents.

B. Planning Board Report

The NJ Courts have requested justification from the township for the redevelopment zones they approved as it relates to the affordable housing plan. Rex reported there will be a special meeting to discuss this issue.

C. Zoning Board Report

Ray was concerned about a construction project on Blackwell Rd., which may differ from the application we reviewed.

Action: review the application approved by the Zoning Board.

D. Woody Plant Ordinance

Nora recently forwarded the 2nd draft of the ordinance, plus a list of utility approved street trees.

Action: Members are asked to review the draft ordinance and send any comments to Nora by May 13. We will discuss any changes to the draft at our next meeting.

E. Tree City USA and Community Forestry Management Program

We have two Tree City street signs to place somewhere in the township. Jim suggested one should be placed near the entrance of the municipal building complex.

F. Tree Seedling Giveaway

We distributed 825 tree seedlings to our community residents on Saturday, April 6 from 9:30 to Noon at the rear of our Public Works Building. Thanks to all who helped make this event a huge success.

G. Chestnut Tree Planting Project

We successfully replanted the Fiddler's Creek site with new seeds on April 11. Thanks to all who helped.

H. Water Monitoring

Mike contacted USGS about the November 2018 data anomaly. The reply noted that the drop in water level of more than 3 feet in November was not real. There was one bad value that has subsequently been deleted.

I. Revenue-Neutral Carbon Fee Bill

The Carbon Fee Resolution was passed unanimously by the Twp. Committee.

J. Single-Use Plastics Ban

There were recently passed bills in Little Silver and Lambertville. We still support a statewide ban.

Action: Mike will forward us an article comparing paper vs. plastic bags

K. Arboretum in Woolsey Park

No update.

Action: continue work on this project.

L. Emerald Ash Borer Updates (see New Business Item B.)

New Business

A. Planning for Arbor Day Events

Jim, and three township public works employees, recently planted a memorial red oak tree for David Blackwell near the entrance to Woolsey Park. A memorial plaque will be created, and a ceremony will be held later this year.

Action: Jim will send a list of related Arbor Day activities we have performed to Michael for inclusion in the Twp's Arbor Day Proclamation.

B. USDA Research Program: Biological Control of Emerald Ash Borer

The USDA has released “release and recovery guidelines” for approved biological control agents, including parasitoid wasps that are available to help protect ash trees.

Action: Mike A. will send us a link to the guideline report which we will discuss at our May meeting.

C. Street Tree Pruning (note: this item was added to the agenda at the start of our meeting)

Bill alerted us to the overly aggressive pruning operations being conducted by our township public works employees while cutting/clearing brush from drainage ditches and other township rights-of-ways along our local roadways. He also showed us photos that the cutting/clearing is going well beyond what is necessary, and they are not considering the health of the trees when using the cutting equipment.

Action: We have issued a formal complaint to the Twp. Engineer regarding this issue, and demand a response to our complaint at our next meeting.

Announcements & Correspondence

A. February 1, 2019 Public Notice Letter from Robert Weiss regarding a treatment works approval application filed on behalf of Bristol-Myers Squibb to NJDEP to upgrade its waste water treatment facilities on Pennington-Rocky Hill Rd; Block 46, Lot 8.01.

* The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm: Motion – Ray, 2nd Mike A; all in favor.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gambino
Secretary