



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Approved Minutes
For the regular meeting of
Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Note: this meeting was conducted using a Zoom videoconferencing application.

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

Statement of Compliance & Roll Call

Members present: Nora Sirbaugh, Rex Parker, Ray Nichols, Mike Aucott, Paul Kinney, Andrew Plunkett, and Jim Gambino (could hear and see others, but could not comment during the meeting).

Members absent: George Kerr, Vanessa Sandom

Also present: Mark Kataryniak - Twp Administrative Officer

Courtney Peters-Manning – Twp Liaison

Members of the Public present: None

Minutes for Approval

Ray took issue with some wording in the minutes regarding our application review comments. A long discussion ensued about Zoning Board protocols.

Action: Courtney will look into how Zoning Board decisions are recorded.

The July 21, 2020 draft minutes were approved – Motion, Rex; 2nd Nora; Abstentions – none; all in favor.

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

Zoning Board Application Reviews

Case No. 2020-13: **Grzsiak Dwelling**

Block 78.42, Lot 31; 209 Pennington-Lawrenceville Road; R-100 Zoning District
Bulk Variance for lot coverage & side yard setback for New Home

We understand the proposed new home with driveway will exceed the allowable 10% lot coverage area for properties located in this zone.

We are also concerned how a septic system will safely perform on a lot which is less than one-half acre in size.

Lots exceeding the maximum impervious coverage area have an adverse affect on our community and environment by increasing storm-water run-off and flooding, and sedimentation of our streams and other water bodies. The cumulative effects of multiple approvals are of serious concern.

For the above reasons we do not recommend approving this application unless the excess lot coverage can be effectively mitigated.

Case No. 2020-15: **Shankar Pool**

Block 15, Lot 2.04; 2 Benson Lane; VRC Zoning District
Bulk Variance for lot coverage for In-Ground Pool

We understand the existing impervious lot coverage area of 14 % exceeds the 10 % allowable lot coverage area for properties located in the VRC zone. The plan shows the pool's addition will exacerbate this issue by increasing impervious coverage to 15.2 %.

We are also concerned this project may encroach on a potential wetland transition area and its effect on a nearby drainage pond which serves this and adjoining properties.

Lots exceeding the maximum impervious coverage area have an adverse affect on our community and environment by increasing storm-water run-off and flooding, and sedimentation of our streams and other water bodies. The cumulative effects of multiple approvals are of serious concern.

For the above reasons we do not recommend approving this application unless the excess lot coverage can be effectively mitigated.

Case No. 2020-18: **Callishaw Properties - AC**

Block 20.01, Lot 6; 170 Pennington-Hopewell Road; R-100 Zoning District
Bulk Variance for setbacks for AC condenser unit

We have no environmental concerns for the proposed project as described in the application.

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

Planning Board Application Reviews

Hogan Self Storage II

Block 91, Lot 18, 1569 Reed Road
Special Industrial (SI) Zoning District
Preliminary and Final Site Plan

We have no environmental concerns for the proposed project as described in the application.

Chowdhury Major Subdivision

Block 92, Lots 1 & 1.04, 362-368 Pennington-Titusville Road
VRC Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Major Subdivision

We understand that five new lots will be created from two existing lots. Three of the new lots will be residential; one new lot will become preserved farmland with a development easement granted to the State Agricultural Development Committee, and one new 30 foot wide lot along the southern portion of the parcels will be conveyed to the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space for use as a trail corridor to connect the existing Jacob's Creek and Woolsey Park hiking trails.

We note that while two of the three new residential lots will be undersized and non-conforming for the six acre minimum lot size for this zoning district, the preserved farmland and potential trail corridor parcels are both beneficial to our community.

We have no environmental concerns for the proposed subdivision as described in the application.

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

Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects

A. Twp Committee Liaison Report

Courtney reported that:

The NJ Legislature passed the “Environmental Justice Bill” which we sent a resolution in support of in July.

The Committee passed a resolution in support of a grant application to the Watershed Institute for Andrew’s small native plant “pocket garden” project.

The Landscape (Woody, Native Plant) Ordinance was passed at the Sep 8 meeting.

The August energy auction did not produce acceptable prices for the Energy Aggregation Program. Concord Energy may rebid in the next six months if conditions look favorable.

B. Planning Board Liaison Report - none

C. Zoning Board Report - none

D. Chestnut Tree Initiatives

Rex made new, weather-resistant signs for the chestnut trees at Woolsey Park.

Mike and Rex discussed their resolution in support of the genetically engineered, blight tolerant, Darling 58 American Chestnut created by the State University of New York’s College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

The resolution was voted on and approved – Motion, Rex; 2nd Paul; Abstentions – none; all in favor. Ray suggested adding a paragraph at the end of the resolution to list who we are sending it to.

Actions: Members are encouraged to enter comments on the USDA web site to promote the non-regulated status for the Darling 58 tree.

Mike will resend us his and Rex’s related article, and a link to the USDA website to enter comments.

Nora will enter/submit our resolution to the USDA site, and send it to the Twp Committee and ANJEC asking them to also adopt the resolution. The resolution may also be sent to NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry, SUNY, FoHVOS, and HV Green Team.

New Business

A. Single-Use Plastics

We discussed creating a possible Twp Ordinance, similar to Pennington and Hopewell Borough’s. We would need to educate local stores/baggers.

Paul and Rex will lead the EC Subcommittee on this issue. Let them know your ideas or if you want to help. The best ideas will not cost businesses money to implement.

Ideas/recommendations will be presented to the Twp Committee. Nora suggested having a business roundtable, and to invite the Lambertville businesses who have successfully banned single-use products.

Action: Courtney will see if the Twp's Economic Development Committee can help with this issue.

B. Native Pocket Garden Initiative

As mentioned earlier, The Twp Committee passed a resolution in support of a grant application to the Watershed Institute for a small native plant "pocket garden" project. If approved, FoHVOS can provide plants for a starter garden.

The project will require several working meetings to develop. It was suggested to have a display garden at the Twp Municipal Building that would be visible to visitors. Mark reminded us about the Twp's liability and the need to pick a site and develop the project vision.

Andrew mentioned his native plant swap on Facebook.

Action: Nora, Paul, and Andrew will meet to plan the project's vision and possible site.

Announcements & Correspondence

- A. As mentioned earlier, the Environmental Justice Bill S-232/A2212 was passed.
- B. We received notice of an application for extension of freshwater wetlands letter of interpretation from NJDEP for Block 46, Lot 42 on Titus Mill Road.
- C. BuyRite is amending their building application and we received notice of their application for freshwater wetlands letter of interpretation from NJDEP for Block 69, Lots 10, 13, 14, & 18 at 222 Rt 31, LLC.
- D. Gypsy moths have been found in our area. The State Agricultural Development Committee will be conducting a related survey in the township.
- E. Members are reminded to check current issues on the EC Awareness Campaign on the Twp web site at <http://www.hopewelltpw.org/540/Current-Environ-Issues>

Action: submit environmental issues to Mark to post on the web site.

- * The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm: Motion – Paul, 2nd Rex; all in favor.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gambino
Secretary