



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Approved Minutes
For the regular meeting of
Tuesday, January 21, 2020

* The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by Nora Sirbaugh.

Statement of Compliance & Roll Call

Members present: Ray Nichols, Jim Gambino, Paul Kinney, Mike Aucott, Vanessa Sandom, Andrew Plunkett, Rex Parker, and Nora Sirbaugh

Members absent: George Kerr

Also present: Mark Kataryniak - Twp Administrative Officer,
Courtney Peters-Manning – Twp Committee Liaison (~8:00 pm)

Members of the Public present: Lia Mastropolo

Reorganization

Nora was nominated for Chairperson by Mike, 2nd by Rex, and elected unanimously.

Ray was nominated for Vice-Chairperson by Rex, 2nd by Nora, and elected unanimously.

Jim was nominated for Secretary by Ray, 2nd by Mike, and elected unanimously.

Note: Courtney Peters-Manning will be the Twp Committee liaison to the EC.

Minutes for Approval

The December 17, 2019 draft minutes were approved as amended – Motion Mike; 2nd Andrew; Abstain – none; all in favor.

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

Public Comment - Lia Mastropolo, of the Watershed Institute, informed us that:

- * NJDEP will be enacting new state stormwater regulations and, the township will have one year to review and enact new corresponding ordinances. The EC may be asked to review some of our existing ordinances.
- * Sustainable Jersey is offering water related project grants in varying amounts. The grant deadline is February 14. We won't have time to apply. There may be grants available from ANJEC or NJDEP for similar future projects where we could partner with the Watershed. Lia will keep us posted.
- * The Watershed Institute will be hosting workshops related to the new stormwater regulations and water quality.

Action: Lia will forward to us information about the upcoming workshops.

2020 Goals - members proposed the following goals:

- * review EC **Action items** from minutes
- * review new **stormwater regulations** when issued by NJ
- * have our **native plant ordinance** adopted by the Twp Committee
- * maintain our Scotch Rd **Well water monitoring**
- * revisit the **public mulch** issue
- * conduct a **tree seedling giveaway**
- * continue work towards creating an **arboretum** in Woolsey park
- * recruit high school **student liaisons** to work with the EC on projects, attend meetings and learn about environmental issues
- * expand work on the **business recycling survey/scorecard** to encourage businesses recycling efforts; secondly to work with the MCIA making them more transparent.
- * **naturalize** additional **stormwater basins** located in the township (public or private)
- * **educate the public** on how to **reduce carbon emissions**
- * conduct a township **electric vehicle demonstration**
- * assist the **Planning Board with Master Plan review**/updating
- * **educate the public** -staff community events such as Pennington Day, 4-H Fair and Hopewell Harvest Fair

Action: Ray will supply us with the community event dates.

2020 Budget

We plan to submit a budget similar to last year's amount, with a slight increase for water monitoring costs and possibly some money allocated for public leaf mulch. Major items include Scotch Rd Well – water monitoring, ANJEC memberships and Tree planting & maintenance projects.

Action: Mark will submit our budget request to the Twp Committee for their review.

Zoning Board Application Reviews

Case No. 2019-12: **Eastern Pedorthics, LLC**

Block 65, Lot 101; 70 Route 31 South; VRC Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Site Plan with Use Variance

We reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Mark Kataryniak and have no environmental concerns for the proposed project.

Case No. 2019-14: **Newgrange School**

Block 91, Lot 3.15; 800 North Road; OP Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Site Plan with Use Variance

We reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Mark Kataryniak and have no environmental concerns for the proposed project.

Actions: 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 Review

National Contractors

Block 91, Lot 14.02, 1607 Reed Road, SI Zoning District
Preliminary Site Plan for Warehouse with Office & Site Improvements

We noted that species of four trees are not identified on the landscape plan, though they have the same icon as the six red maple deciduous trees listed. We suggested the applicant diversify the proposed trees by planting a mixture of deciduous trees such as a combination of red maple and river birch.

The giant arborvitae trees shown on the landscape plan are not native species. They are also particularly attractive to deer browsing. We suggested the applicant replace all arborvitae trees with native eastern red cedar trees to create the same desired visual screening effect.

Although we understand the applicant is not required to do so, we suggested they incorporate green infrastructure by naturalizing the proposed stormwater basin through plantings of native pollinator species and mowing it annually. Pollinator species could include those shown for the rain garden portion of the proposed landscape plan.

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

Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects

A. Twp Committee Liaison Report – Courtney reported the township will be hosting two upcoming information sessions regarding community energy aggregation. One session will be held at the Watershed Institute, the other at Stony Brook Elementary school.

Actions: Courtney will check on the following items for us:

1. the status of the Woody Plant Ordinance to make sure the attorney review gets completed so the ordinance can go to the Twp. Committee for a discussion and vote.
2. the status of the Woolsey park Advisory Committee so they can get started

B. Planning Board Liaison Report – their next meeting is scheduled for Jan 23.

C. Zoning Board Report – Vanessa recently became a zoning board member.

D. Single-Use Plastics Ban

Prior to our meeting, Mark sent us information regarding the Mercer County Parks, Trex Recycling Challenge. Various types of plastic film can be recycled by taking them to MC's Hunt House on Blackwell Road.

The NJ Assembly has not yet voted on their version of Senate Bill 2776. Prior to our meeting, Mark sent us a related article from NJ Spotlight.

Action: Courtney will check on the status of our resolution to the Township Committee urging them to support state Senate Bill 2776

E. Chestnut Tree Project Update

Mike discussed his and Rex's upcoming article about genetic engineering and the approval process as it relates to forest health and the survival of the American chestnut tree.

Action: Mike will forward a copy of the article to us.

Nora discussed the American beech leaf scorch issue, and a landowners 13 ash tree survivors.

F. Arbor Day Event – tree seedling giveaway

The township is waiting to hear back from NJ Forestry regarding our application to participate in the 2020 Tree Recovery Program. If approved, we plan to have the giveaway on April 4 at the Municipal Bldg.

Actions: Mark will keep us posted.

Members should think about other ways we could celebrate Arbor Day (April 24).

New Business

A. Recycling

Paul reported that:

1. his recycling scorecard article was published in Mercer Me.
2. he sent an e-mail to Mark regarding the discrepancy between which plastics Soltera will collect (#'s 1 thru 5, & #7) vs. what the Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA) allows us to put in our curb-side recycling buckets (only #1 & #2), and asking the Twp. Committee to find out if other Mercer municipalities can participate in curb-side recycling of these other plastics.

Action: Mark will forward this information to our Twp. Committee liaison, Courtney.

B. Grants Coordinator

The idea was to appoint someone in charge of tracking grant deadlines and amounts to help with planning future EC projects. We decided to use a Google Document (an active document) so members could add to the list of available grants (populate it) anytime they learn of them.

Action: Nora will create the "grant Google document" and share it with us.

C. Salem Oak

Mark informed us that all NJ municipalities will be receiving a Salem Oak tree seedling. We plan to plant ours in Woolsey Park; spot to be determined.

Action: Nora will try and secure a few seedlings from the Mercer Oak which we may also plant in Woolsey Park.

Announcements & Correspondence - none

- * The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm: Motion – Mike, 2nd Paul; all in favor.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gambino
Secretary