

**STILLWATER TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
April 9, 2012**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Fleck, Mrs. Emmetts, Mrs. Tracey, Mr. Szabo, Ms. Ramberg, Mr. Nystrom, Ms. Fobes-Jacoby, Mr. Branagan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Klimek

Mr. Branagan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the statement that this meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. This was a regularly scheduled meeting of the Stillwater Township Environmental Commission. Regular meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Stillwater Township Municipal Building located in Middletown, New Jersey.

The flag was saluted and roll call taken.

Minutes

Mr. Szabo made a **motion** to approve the minutes of March 12, 2012, seconded by Mrs. Tracey.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Fleck, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, abstain, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Ms. Ramberg, yes, Ms. Fobes-Jacoby, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

Executive Minutes

Mrs. Tracey made a **motion** to approve the Executive Minutes of March 12, 2012, seconded by Ms. Fobes-Jacoby.

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Fleck, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Ms. Ramberg, yes, Ms. Fobes-Jacoby, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

Bills

Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to approve the following bill, pending availability of funds, seconded by Mrs. Fleck:
Secretary: \$ 180.25

Roll Call Vote: Mrs. Fleck, yes, Mrs. Emmetts, yes, Mrs. Tracey, yes, Mr. Szabo, yes, Ms. Ramberg, yes, Ms. Fobes-Jacoby, yes, Mr. Branagan, yes

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 7:10 p.m.

Amy Schwartz, 915 Duck Pond Road spoke on behalf of Girl Scout Troop 1065. The group is considering an energy audit and asked the EC if they knew of any service projects. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby explained an energy audit was conducted by the township resulting in upgrades to the HVAC systems in the municipal owned buildings. She indicated there may be service projects available pertaining to Sustainable Jersey and actions required toward certification. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby offered to discuss the matter further with Mrs. Schwartz and she noted she would be at Clean Up Day with a Sustainable Jersey information display, which was approved by Mr. Fisher, Recreation Commission liaison. Mrs. Schwartz indicated the service project must be completed by September 2013.

There being no further public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 7:13 p.m.

Old Business

Land Conservancy of New Jersey (LC) Contract: No report. This item will be added to the next agenda.

Trails: No report. This item will be added to the next agenda.

Sustainable Jersey Update: Ms. Fobes-Jacoby reported the State is still considering the EC request for a speaker regarding Sustainable Jersey. It was suggested that a representative from a participating Sustainable Jersey municipality may be willing to provide a presentation on their experience with the program. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby would like to obtain ideas on what the community would like to pursue for Sustainable Jersey and the EC agreed that Ms. Fobes-Jacoby would draft a checklist/survey to assess their interests. The survey would be emailed to the EC members for their review. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby spoke with Tahirih Smith of Sustainable Jersey inquiring if there is a residency requirement for Green Team members. Ms. Smith indicated residency is not required although it is recommended they be vested in the community. Mr. Szabo expressed concern with the lack of a Sustainable Jersey presentation and the time lapse since it was requested. He felt asking a local municipality involved in the program to speak would be difficult as they are already participating in it. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby reiterated that the program is voluntary, not mandatory, and the EC can withdraw at any point. Mr. Szabo suggested asking a municipality that has withdrawn from the program as well as a participating one to obtain both views. Ms. Ramberg suggested Mr. Szabo provide any questions he may have for Sustainable Jersey and they can be provided to a program representative to be answered. Mr. Szabo felt there has not been open public debate on the matter and he would like to hear a presentation from the State. He agreed to compose a list of 12 questions.

EC Newsletter Update: The EC reviewed the newsletter and additional changes were made. The newsletter will be distributed through the Stillwater School, the website and at the Municipal Building.

Amphibian Crossing: Mr. Branagan reported it was a bad year for the crossing as there was no rain. No egg masses were observed at the pond near the State Park. Mrs. Fleck referenced a NJH article on the Amphibian Crossing including comment from Mr. Branagan.

Animal Waste in Waterways: Compliance information regarding New Jersey's Animal Waste Management Rule was emailed to the EC members. Mr. Branagan reported that the farm referenced at the last EC meeting is complying with the requirements. Ms. Chamings noted that Steve Komar of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Sussex County can assist individuals with the required documents that have to be submitted to the State, and she has put the farmer in question in touch with Mr. Komar. Mr. Komar can be reached at the following email: SKOMAR@NJAES.RUTGERS.EDU

New Business

No Littering Signs: Mr. Branagan explained that when the original littering ordinance was adopted, no littering signs were installed at all entrances to the township. He stated the sign on Route 521 is missing and the one on Old Schoolhouse Road is faded and not visible. Following further discussion, the EC agreed to forward a memo to Mayor Scott and the Township Committee asking the DPW to check the location and visibility of the signs; and also noting that since the General Ordinance has been codified the littering ordinance number has changed and inquiring if this should be addressed on each sign.

No Idling Signs: Mr. Branagan recommended sending a letter to the local business owners informing them they can purchase "no idling" signs. Ms. Fobes-Jacoby suggested purchasing signs for the Recycling Center and Mrs. Schwartz suggested placing handwritten signs in the storefront windows of local businesses. Ms. Ramberg recommended providing the information on idling issues to the business owners. Mr. Branagan will obtain costs for signs and more information on a website for idling information as well as the State statute governing such.

Tree Cutting Ordinance: Mr. Branagan was asked by the Zoning Officer to review the current tree ordinance as there have been a recent number of residents that have clear cut their properties. The tree clearing can result in erosion and water/drainage issues. Ms. Ramberg noted that many clear their properties to fuel outdoor wood burning furnaces. Mr. Branagan reviewed the tree ordinance and he was unsure of how it could be improved. Ms. Ramberg stated that New Jersey is a Firewise State and as such certain areas around a dwelling need to be clear. She provided information and the website to the EC: www.njwildfire.org. She noted protection must be provided to watersheds to prevent fires. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Branagan agreed to review the information and the EC agreed to table this item until the next meeting on May 14, 2012. Mr. Szabo suggested using the tree ordinance information in the next edition of the EC newsletter.

Outdoor Woodburning Furnace Ordinance: In response to public questioning, the EC briefly discussed the Outdoor Woodburning Furnace Ordinance and indicated that under the new ordinance, the OWF cannot burn from May 1st through October 1st. The ordinance is available on the township website.

Swartswood Lake – Lotus: Mr. Szabo discussed an issue the Swartswood Lake Watershed Association is currently facing with the lotus plant which is increasingly invading the lake. The State will only allow ten percent of the existing lotus to be trimmed. This is an ongoing problem and the Watershed Association is trying to have the lotus declared as an invasive rather than endangered. Ms. Ramberg referenced a joint meeting of several departments of the NJDEP that was held at Camp Hoover regarding the lotus subject where there was disagreement on the matter amongst the DEP officials.

No Idling Signs: Mr. Branagan suggested holding a contest through the school for a no idling sign. Mr. Branagan will contact Anna Memmelaar to discuss it further.

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public at 8:13 p.m.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed at 8:13 p.m.

Planning Board Liaison Report:

Mr. Branagan reported the following on the Planning Board (PB) meeting held on 3/21/12:

- Working on the Master Plan Update
- Discussed revising the State owned land, increasing the 7.5 acre requirement to a 20 or 25 acre minimum.
- PB will obtain a list of government owned properties
- Solar/wind turbine ordinances will be included in the Master Plan
- Mr. Branagan mentioned the parking lot light at the Municipal Building should be replaced with a motion sensor light.

Township Liaison Report: Committeewoman Chammings

Ms. Chammings reported the following:

- Phase II of the Municipal Building renovations will address the outside lighting.
- 3/21/12 – Land Conservancy sent a letter of response to the Township Committee, copied to Mr. Klimek.
- 4/12/12 – Donna Traylor sent a letter to the Township Committee regarding Block 3805, Lot 4.01, defining what the preliminary resolution would support.
- Mr. Szabo questioned whether or not the County would take the steps the Land Conservancy did to preserve a property, noting it is a huge amount of work. Ms. Chammings felt that question has not been answered adequately at this point.
- Ms. Chammings stated that Byram at one time had considered withdrawing from Sustainable Jersey and the EC may want to contact them for more information.
- West End Drive/Duck Pond Road survey to locate the drainage easement to address the flooding issue has been completed. The area is currently very dry. The water drains into the corner of Duck Pond Road and West End Drive to the farm area. Mr. Branagan expressed concern with the drainage as there is a vernal pond of high value and it should never be completely drained.
- The National Park Service has ruled to allow the proposed PSE&G power line project to follow the existing transmission line.
- Ms. Chammings suggested checking into Clean Communities funding for the no littering and no idling signs.
- The rusty farm equipment at Veteran’s Memorial Park was removed from along the trail by Recreation Commission members.
- A public meeting will be held by the Recreation Commission on 4/16/12 at the Municipal Building at 7 p.m. to discuss the installation of a playground at Veteran’s Memorial Park.
- Stillwater Day will be held on 6/16/12.
- Ms. Chammings provided a copy of a trail map distributed by the County Open Space Board.
- Ms. Chammings suggested the EC review the following pending bills: A-458; S-899; and S-1085:
A-458: Prohibits cultivation or production of marijuana on preserved farmland and eligibility for farmland assessment of any land used for such purposes.
S-899: Revises standard of value for the purposes of real property assessment where the property owner is responsible for environmental damage to real property.
S-1085: Establishes forest harvest program on State-owned lands.
- The Stillwater Volunteer Fire Department will hold a Comedy Night on 5/19/12, dinner at 6 p.m. followed by the show at 7:30 p.m.; tickets are available by contacting the SVFD, cost \$40.00.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mrs. Emmetts made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Fobes-Jacoby. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder, Secretary

Jack Branagan, Chairperson