



Environmental Commission

October 16, 2012

(Minutes)

Prepared by:

Paul Demarest

Councilman Kashwick called to order, at 8:13pm, the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Environmental Commission for the Borough of Closter, New Jersey, convening Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at Borough Hall.



Attendance

Present

- Brenda Cummings
- Keith Scholz- Shade Tree Commission Liaison
- John Kashwick- Council Liaison
- Mary Mayer- Alternate #1
- Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Associate Member/Historic Preservation Commission Liaison
- Jaewook Jun- Associate Member

Absent

- Paul MacDonald- Chairman
- Steven Isaacson
- Robert Di Dio- Planning Board Liaison
- VACANT- Full Member
- VACANT- Alternate #2
- Arthur Goldberg, MD- Associate Member



Miscellaneous

In lieu of the absent Chairman MacDonald, Councilman Kashwick chaired the meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Scholz and seconded by Ms. Cummings, to approve the minutes for the September 18, 2012 meeting; the motion passed by acclamation.

Councilman Kashwick opened the meeting to the public for questions and/or comments.

Peter Hosek, 16 Cross Street, Closter, New Jersey, spoke of his concern regarding the rampant influx of the deer and wild rabbit populations in the region and the related public health concerns; he referenced his pre-filed article from the local newspaper, *The Record*, and photograph of deer feces. Mr. Hosek informed that said article reveals both Bergen County and Passaic County are not taking advantage of a community-based deer management program (created by the State of New Jersey in 1995) that authorizes, at no cost to municipalities, techniques such as controlled hunting, use of sharpshooters, capture and removal as well as fertility control in curtailing the over-population. While he acknowledged hunting is not an option for the Borough, he insisted other methods are viable. Councilman Kashwick stated he would see to it that the Governing Body discusses the matter at its next meeting on October 24th.

Councilman Kashwick stated the latest edition of *New Jersey Municipalities* was the sole piece of correspondence received by the Commission.



Old Business

Trails

Councilman Kashwick informed that the absent Mr. Isaacson emailed he had conversed with Andrew Baron, a Board of Health member, with respect to intended repairs of several single-lane boardwalks throughout the Borough's trail system; he said would be contacting the Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), William Dahle, about ways to better anchor the boards, and he confirmed that the DPW is not storing any reserve of boards at its facility. Councilman Kashwick said he recently walked the trail section in need of repair, from Tenakill Street towards the supermarket, *A&P* (400 Demarest Avenue), and he found that boards are not anchored but rather strewn all about. Ms. Mayer said she would inform both Mr. Isaacson and Mr. Baron of the anchoring method used for trails at the Nature Center.

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg revealed she and the absent Dr. Goldberg recently visited Buzzoni Farm Park. On a separate occasion, she said she visited the site with her husband, but they were unable to walk its trails because 5 coyotes were found to be roaming the area; Ms. Mayer pointed out that coyotes are the primary means of controlling the deer population after motor vehicle impacts.

Bicycle Racks

Mr. Scholz said he spoke with Mr. Dahle, who informed there are 2 new racks being stored at the DPW facility and that he has yet to be instructed as to where they should be installed. As a result, Mr. Scholz said their installation should not be expected until warm weather returns in the spring. Councilman Kashwick stated Mr. Isaacson requested he be given information on and cost for the racks because the Chamber of Commerce hopes to donate 1 for the downtown area; Mr. Scholz agreed to do so.

Mac Bain Farm

Ms. Mayer said preparation is underway for the upcoming Farm Festival on-site. She said Mr. Isaacson and Ms. Cummings have produced and distributed postcards respectively to advertise the event in the local school system; she further noted that she is purchasing the paint and craft materials and Mr. Isaacson is buying food and refreshments. She stated John Mc Caffrey, caretaker and resident of the Farm, purchased 1 to 1.5 bins of pumpkins earlier this autumn for use during a "Teens and Tots" event sponsored by Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest (most of the batch grown on-site at that time had begun to spoil). Ms. Mayer reported there are currently 50 or so healthy pumpkins remaining, which would have to be supplemented for the Festival. She said she has been assured by the son of Mr. Mc Caffrey, who is recuperating from a medical procedure, that the Farm's hose will be functioning, a necessity being a bonfire would be part of the celebration. Ms. Mayer questioned if any high school students are available to volunteer for the Festival on October 27th to assist Mr. Isaacson and his wife as well as Ms. Cummings, who would provide the storytelling; Ms. Cummings replied that a student, Francesca Costa, is available as are 2 of her friends. Mr. Jun said he hopes to attend along with some friends. Being Councilman Kashwick and Ms. Bouton-Goldberg were uncertain they could

attend, Ms. Cummings said she would ask Ms. Costa if 4 to 5 friends could accompany her. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg said she could supply forsythia branches, which are optimal for marshmallow roasting being they are green, straight and do not burn.

2013 Commission Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg and seconded by Mr. Scholz, to have the Commission convene its 2013 meetings on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:30pm (a departure from its current schedule) pending consent of absent Commission members. The motion passed by acclamation.



Liaison Reports

Governing Body

Councilman Kashwick informed that the Governing Body is considering an amendment to outdoor café regulations (Chapter 141 of the Borough Code), which he hoped would include the ban of plastics; he stressed, however, that prior to the amendment being introduced, the Chamber of Commerce would be engaged to promote the benefits of such an action to both merchants and the environment (preventing contamination of the Borough’s storm drains and waterways).

Councilman Kashwick stated the Governing Body, which initially authorized the Borough’s outright acquisition of the defunct Closter Swim Club, will now likely acquire the site by default. He said the Borough was awarded approximately \$340,000.00 in grant monies to purchase the parcel; he said, however, the funds can apparently be used for purchasing other lands so long as the State of New Jersey’s deadlines are met.

Councilman Kashwick informed there is a proposal forthcoming in the New Jersey Legislature, which assesses a fee for the use of plastic bags; he suggested re-showing the Green Team’s latest installment in its film series (*Bag It: Is Your Life Too Plastic?*) to garner more public interest.

Planning Board

Due to the absence of Mr. Di Dio, no report was given on Planning Board activities.

Shade Tree Commission (STC)

Mr. Scholz stated inspections of street trees for the eastern portion of the Borough are being coordinated; he noted most of the estimates received for pruning/removal have been at least 2x the STC’s budget.

Green Team

Ms. Cummings said she is collaborating with local Girl Scouts on ways to have the Green Team’s film series concentrate on topics important to children.

She said the Chief of Police, Dennis Kaine, felt both the Commission and Green Team could best assist in reducing vehicle idling by collaborating with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO); she noted he said any distribution of fliers must be via the PTO, not the Police Department, which must concentrate on enforcing traffic patterns and illegal parking. Ms. Mayer suggested

the PTO be approached by the Green Team not as a complainant but rather as a gesture to enlighten it on the issue's importance.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg stated there were no HPC matters to report.



New Business

The Commission discussed no new matters.



Plan Review

The Commission prepared the following administrative reports:

Zoning Board of Adjustment

- ◇ 120 High Street: This is an application for a Use Variance involving the continuation of a 2-family use. The Commission had no comments.

- ◇ 24 Naugle Street: This is an application for both Use Variance and Site Plan Approvals involving the continuation of a contractor's yard. The Commission made the following comments: 1.) preserve 30" maple slated for removal to accommodate driveway expansion; 2.) redesign curbing and sidewalk area to discourage vehicle parking; 3.) trees should be replaced accordingly at curb line; 4.) consider use of permeable pavers.

Planning Board

- ◇ 540 Durie Avenue: This is an application for Site Plan Approval involving the rehabilitation and re-occupancy of a commercial building (formerly "Closter Recreation Center"). Councilman Kashwick was pleased that a lawn area is being proposed. The Commission had no comments.

- ◇ 19 Ver Valen Street: This is an application for Site Plan Approval involving the redevelopment of a shopping center ("Closter Plaza"). The Commission made the following comments: 1.) consider wider variety of trees such as pin oaks; 2.) tree islands should be larger in both count and size throughout parking lot; 3.) underground piping systems should be inspected and replaced if need be; 4.) consider native grasses rather than ornamental (proposed English ivy attracts deer); 5.) consider sunshields with solar panels over portions of parking lot; 6.) provide means of connecting site to downtown area via pedestrian walkway; 6.) consider use of permeable surfaces for patio/outdoor café areas to alleviate drainage concerns.



Adjournment

There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Cummings and seconded by Mr. Scholz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54pm. The motion passed by acclamation.