



Environmental Commission

April 16, 2013

(Minutes)

Prepared by:

Paul Demarest

Chairman MacDonald called to order, at 8:05pm, the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Environmental Commission for the Borough of Closter, New Jersey, convening Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at Borough Hall.



Attendance

Present

- Paul MacDonald- Chairman
- Brenda Cummings- Full Member
- Keith Scholz- Full Member (Shade Tree Commission Liaison)
- Robert Di Dio- Full Member (Planning Board Liaison)
- John Kashwick- Full Member (Council Liaison)
- Ethel Abrams- Alternate #1
- Jaewook Jun- Associate Member

Absent

- Steven Isaacson- Full Member
- Thomas Colwell- Full Member
- VACANT- Alternate #2
- Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Associate Member (Historic Preservation Commission Liaison)
- VACANT- Associate Member



Miscellaneous

A motion was made by Mr. Di Dio and seconded by Ms. Cummings, to approve the minutes for the March 19, 2013 meeting; the motion passed by acclamation with Chairman MacDonald abstaining.

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting to the public for questions and/or comments; no one wished to be heard.

Chairman MacDonald read into the record correspondence received by the Commission, specifically, a memo from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) informing of a “Green Up” trade show/exhibition at Van Saun County Park, which is being sponsored by the Bergen County Utilities Authority. Chairman MacDonald questioned said memo’s reference to those attending the event being able to earn continuing professional units (CPU’s); Councilman Kashwick stated such pertains to certified recycling professionals only. Chairman MacDonald announced the Borough’s latest Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) has been released. He said the latest edition of *New Jersey Municipalities*, published by the New Jersey State League of Municipalities (NJLM) was also received.



Old Business

Trails

In light of Mr. Isaacson’s absence, no report was given.

Bicycle Racks

Mr. Scholz stated the Department of Public Works (DPW) has yet to install 2 racks purchased in 2012; Councilman Kashwick said he reiterated to William Dahle, Superintendent of the DPW, that 1 should be placed at Pfeiffer Park near the bus stop at the intersection of Closter Dock Road and Piermont Road.

Mac Bain Farm

Mr. Di Dio stated there was no progress made on getting approval to install an irrigation system on-site; Chairman MacDonald informed he has not yet been able to contact the Borough Administrator, Richard Sheola, to discuss said project’s feasibility.

119 Hickory Lane

Councilman Kashwick stated a committee established by the Governing Body to deal with the public outcry over the future site of Metropolitan Farm recently met with concerned residents; he said the committee indicated that local enforcement of farm activities was possible since such fell within the jurisdiction of the New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee, and more directly, the Bergen County Agriculture Development Board. Councilman Kashwick stated nothing permanent relating to the farm, less the residence on-site, has been constructed except for a roadway recently installed on-site, which is currently under review as to whether or not it violates any existing order handed down at the county or state level. At this point, he stated residents must take it upon themselves to pursue further legal action against the Farm.

Arthur Goldberg, MD, a former Commission member speaking from the audience, questioned the determination of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) with respect to a tributary on-site; Councilman Kashwick replied the NJDEP’s original assessment that it was a Category 1 waterway feeding into a reservoir was later rescinded, and it was proven to be nothing more than a drainage ditch (requiring no buffer between it and any construction taking place at the Farm).



Liaison Reports

Governing Body

Councilman Kashwick stated the Borough’s 2013 operating budget was adopted on April 10th, noting the Commission’s portion is \$3,000.00. He informed that the capital budget was introduced and it includes open space funding requests, specifically \$4,000.00 for tree planting at Ruckman Park and \$12,000.00 for trail maintenance in the event the Borough is not awarded grant money for the latter. Councilman Kashwick reiterated funds set aside for the abandoned barn project at Mac Bain Farm can be redirected towards upgrading the water utility service on-site (irrigation); the Commission concurred, saying it should take precedent over the barn project. Councilman Kashwick stated a vote to approve the irrigation project was not necessary but noted an estimate for the cost of work is.

Both Chairman MacDonald and Mr. Scholz agreed to attend a meeting on April 23rd at Ruckman

Park to determine the species of replacement trees for those lost during the 2011 Halloween winter storm, which are to be planted along Piermont Road; Mr. Scholz reiterated the selections would have deep root systems to ensure their survival. Councilman Kashwick noted the project is a joint effort between the Environmental, Shade Tree and Recreation Commissions, and the planting would take place in autumn.

Councilman Kashwick reminded of the bi-annual Joint Meeting scheduled for April 27th, at which Borough officials and the public discuss land use matters.

Planning Board

Mr. Di Dio stated there to be no new activity to report.

Shade Tree Commission (STC)

Mr. Scholz stated there are no new matters to discuss other than the previously-mentioned tree planting at Ruckman Park.

Green Team

Ms. Cummings stated the Borough-wide garbage cleanup/recycling event was a success. She noted she, along with Ms. Abrams and Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, recently gathered to begin conceptualizing a Borough brochure for purposes of educating residents on recycling, waste management, etc. She stated those versions of other municipalities would be researched to assist in creating a draft.

Chairman MacDonald said the final destination of recycled items left at curbside is known only to Miele Sanitation Co., which is contracted to collect the Borough's recyclables; he felt a breakdown of what is actually recycled is warranted, noting the Borough should be recycling more than the items marked as #'s 1 and 2 of the Society of the Plastic Industry (SPI) resin identification coding system, which is identified on packaging inside a 3-chasing-arrow recycling symbol. Ms. Cummings concurred, saying the Mayor's office agrees any inquiry on recycling should be directed at the vendor himself, Joseph Miele; she said the operation's Closter site serves merely as a transfer station, and she believed the sorting of collected items occurs at a facility in Sussex County. She expressed concern that much ends up being shipped to China or, worse, are dumped in landfills or the ocean. Ms. Abrams questioned what SPI # is assigned to plastic water bottles, noting they are used in part to produce Whole Foods Markets' shopping bags; Ms. Cummings replied they are classified as #1, though they can only be recycled once.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Being Ms. Bouton-Goldberg was absent, no update was given on the HPC.



New Business

Chairman MacDonald revealed he was contacted by a representative from Stantec, Inc. about installing monitoring wells on Borough property (with emphasis on a nearby streambed) adjacent to A&P (400 Demarest Avenue) following the discovery of contamination possibly originating from the supermarket's parking lot. Chairman MacDonald remembered there being monitoring of said parking lot up until approximately 2002, when the franchise began having

financial difficulty. He said a meeting with the representative was scheduled for April 25th, at which time more detail would be given on the company's proposal to gather soil boring samples and determine if volatile organic compounds (VOC) are present. Councilman Kashwick said a dry cleaning establishment occupied the A&P site sometime in the past, to which Chairman MacDonald stated no paper trail existed on the dry cleaners according to Stantec, Inc. Councilman Kashwick expressed his skepticism about the consultant's intentions, noting the NJDEP should be alerting the Borough of any contamination, not a private company; he further commented that only the Governing Body can retain such consulting services. Chairman MacDonald said he would contact the Mayor's office and the Borough Engineer, Nick De Nicola, PE on how to proceed. Mr. Jun inquired about when the supposed pollution started; Councilman Kashwick responded that it would be highly unlikely for the NJDEP to allow monitoring to simply lapse in 2002. Chairman MacDonald said he would get confirmation if A&P is or was a client of Stantec, Inc. Ms. Cummings stated the rear of the A&P supermarket is constantly littered with debris, creating an eyesore. Mr. Di Dio expressed disappointment that given its own dire circumstances that A&P continues to object having Whole Foods Market open a location at the "Closter Plaza".



Plan Review

The Commission prepared the following administrative reports:

Planning Board

- ◇ 38 Demarest Avenue: This is an application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving the construction of a new single-family house. The Commission recommended retaining the 3 trees slated for removal, 1 of which has a caliper measurement of 30", unless they are determined to be dead or diseased.

- ◇ 388 Anderson Avenue: This is an application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving the construction of a new single-family house. Mr. Di Dio informed that approximately 15 trees are being removed, many of which are located in the rear yard and define the corner lot's property line; he further noted that none of the trees come within the footprint of the new residence or driveway. The Commission recommended retaining the trees in the rear yard unless they are determined to be dead or diseased.



There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Councilman Kashwick and seconded by Mr. Di Dio, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. The motion passed by acclamation.