



Environmental Commission

June 18, 2013

(Minutes)

Prepared by:

Paul Demarest

Chairman MacDonald called to order, at 8:04pm, the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Environmental Commission for the Borough of Closter, New Jersey, convening Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at Borough Hall.



Attendance

Present

- Paul MacDonald- Chairman
- Steven Isaacson- Full Member
- Keith Scholz- Full Member (Shade Tree Commission Liaison)
- John Kashwick- Full Member (Council Liaison)
- Ethel Abrams- Alternate #1

Absent

- Brenda Cummings- Full Member
- Robert Di Dio- Full Member (Planning Board Liaison)
- Thomas Colwell- Full Member
- VACANT- Alternate #2
- Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Associate Member (Historic Preservation Commission Liaison)
- Jaewook Jun- Associate Member
- VACANT- Associate Member



Miscellaneous

A motion was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Mr. Scholz, to approve the minutes for the May 21, 2013 meeting; the motion passed by acclamation.

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

Chairman MacDonald stated there was no correspondence to read into the record.



Old Business

Trails

Mr. Isaacson stated he recently spoke with Jonathan Martin, a representative from the New York-Jersey Trail Conference, who has yet to get the approval of his superiors to allow for the Conference to open and maintain trails in connection with the proposed “Northern Valley Trail System”. Mr. Isaacson said that although William Dahle, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), had reservations about the pedestrian bridge near Brook Street not being in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), he would nonetheless provide a path, most likely consisting of woodchips, to and from the structure. Mr. Isaacson said he contacted the establishment, Written In Stone (84 Herbert Avenue) about

monumentalizing several trail areas with signage; he reported the estimate to engrave a boulder would cost \$500.00 to \$1,000.00, though a few hundred dollars would be saved if the Commission supplied the stone. He said the price compromised of labor costs, not materials. Though he was not certain, Mr. Isaacson assumed the DPW could supply transportation of the boulder to its destination once it was engraved. He noted Written In Stone could produce both metal signs, at approximately \$500.00 each (resembling the blue and silver markers installed by the Bergen County Historical Society at its landmark sites) as well as engraved brick pavers (8"x8"), such as those placed within the walkway of the Closter Public Library, at cost of \$60.00 each; Mr. Scholz felt the latter option inferior since its viewing would depend on weather conditions. Chairman MacDonald gave an ultimatum about deciding upon a permanent sign for Scholz Bridge. Mr. Isaacson mentioned that a 12"x18" plaque would cost \$500.00, but he informed that the City of New York manufactures custom street signs (aluminum with cut lettering) costing \$35.00 to \$50.00, 1 of which is adorned at his residence. Mr. Isaacson suggested a sign be affixed to the bridge's balustrade which would be visible when approaching from the north. Chairman MacDonald inquired about the wooden ground signs installed at both Farrell Woods and Olaf & Ingeborg Hagen Park; Mr. Isaacson replied Signs By Blohm, an establishment in the Borough of New Milford, made said signage. Both agreed an estimate should be obtained.

Chairman MacDonald believed several blue diamond markers throughout the Borough should be replaced because they fail to sufficiently indicate the presence of trail entrances; Mr. Isaacson responded that the DPW could assist with installing appropriate signage at roadsides such as those he designed to locate shopper parking spaces in the downtown area.

Chairman MacDonald reiterated the adhesive laminate on the trail map posting at the Closter Public Library is deteriorating; Mr. Isaacson replied the weather-damaged sign could be refurbished by using a protective coating such as car wax. Councilman Kashwick mentioned that 2 additional trail map postings are located at both Olaf & Ingeborg Hagen Park, which Mr. Isaacson revealed is in need of cleaning, and Memorial Park. Mr. Isaacson said all 3 were installed 5 to 6 years ago and designed by local artist, Timothy Blunk.

Mac Bain Farm

In light of Mr. Di Dio's absence, there was no report given.

Plume Investigation at 400 Demarest Avenue

Chairman MacDonald stated that according to the Borough Engineer, Nick De Nicola, PE, environmental monitoring has been occurring at the A&P supermarket site (400 Demarest Avenue) for approximately 10 years; Chairman MacDonald reiterated, however, he was present recently when 3 initial well points (perforated pipes with 8' length and 1.5" diameter) were established by the firm, Stantec, Inc., to retrieve water samples from a nearby stream in Olaf & Ingeborg Hagen Park. Chairman MacDonald said he would assure that the Borough is made aware of any future monitoring wells in the vicinity of said waterway, and he suggested Mr. De Nicola be supplied with all future test results.

Tree Removal at 437-439 Durie Avenue

Mr. Isaacson said he was informed that an initial Borough approval had been given for several trees to be removed on-site, with additional removals being subsequently approved; he noted, as a result, the site, currently being redeveloped, has been essentially clear-cut.

High School Senior Service Program

Chairman MacDonald said the 2013 high school senior service program ended earlier in the day. He noted that, in the future, it would behoove the Farm's caretaker and resident, John Mc Caffrey, to provide an itinerary to the volunteering students on tasks to be performed on-site in the event he and his son are not present.



Liaison Reports

Governing Body

Councilman Kashwick stated there were no new matters to discuss.

Planning Board

In light of Mr. Di Dio's absence, Mr. Isaacson reported that the Board will hold its first public hearing on June 27th to consider the re-filed application for the redevelopment of "Closter Plaza".

Shade Tree Commission (STC)

Mr. Scholz said the Ruckman Park tree planting project would commence during autumn; he said the STC is awaiting consent from the Recreation Commission to install a bicycle rack at Ruckman Park. He said in the unlikely event permission is not granted, the next logical location for a rack would be Mac Bain Farm. Both Chairman MacDonald and Mr. Isaacson disagreed, saying Memorial Park would be a better choice due to the presence of basketball courts and despite the fact bikes could be secured using the existing chain link fencing at both active parks. Mr. Isaacson said the Chamber of Commerce would be installing racks on private land at the "Closter Commons" and "Heidenberg Plaza" shopping centers as well as the parking lot behind 224-228 Closter Dock Road.

Green Team

Due to Ms. Cummings' absence, no report was given.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

In light of Ms. Bouton-Goldberg's absence, no report was given.



New Business

Tree Removal at 25 Westervelt Avenue

Chairman MacDonald stated several trees were cut down on-site on the eve of demolishing the existing house; Mr. Scholz elaborated that the property owner blamed the tree service he hired for not following instructions while he was vacationing. Chairman MacDonald revealed that an abandoned site (63 Closter Dock Road) was recently clear-cut without Borough permission, and a \$17,000.00 settlement was reached between the Municipal Court and the property owner, which was a reduction from the original \$85,000.00 assessment determined by the Borough's Tree Expert. Mr. Isaacson stated that the City of Teaneck recently adopted an ordinance allowing for an applicant to retain a certified tree expert to determine the need for a tree on private land to be removed and if so, said tree must be replaced and \$100.00 fee paid to the Borough.

Mr. Isaacson reported that the property owner of 275 Durie Avenue, a corner lot, is lobbying to have the Borough remove a badly-damaged tree located in the buffer area between the sidewalk and Knickerbocker Road; Councilman Kashwick interjected, saying Bergen County has jurisdiction over the matter.



Plan Review

The Commission prepared the following administrative reports:

Zoning Board of Adjustment

437-439 Durie Avenue: This is an application for Use Variance and Site Plan Approvals involving both the 4-family use conversion of a 2-family house and the 1-family use conversion of a detached garage. The Commission acknowledged its receipt of a landscaping plan previously requested. Chairman MacDonald stated few trees would be affected by the proposed driveway layout with several being preserved throughout the site. Mr. Isaacson said it is rumored that an adjacent lot, 421 Durie Avenue (upon which the historically-designated Harold Hess Lustron House is situated) could be involved with the subject parcel in the creation of an 8-apartment affordable housing complex containing up to 12 bedrooms. The Commission had no further comments.

411 Piermont Road: This is an application for Use Variance and Site Plan Approvals involving the construction of outdoor (rooftop) restaurant dining accommodations. The Commission had no further comments.

Planning Board

14 Laurence Court: This is an application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving the construction of a new 1-family house. Chairman MacDonald informed that unless due to a severe change in elevation, several tree removals are needlessly being proposed in the rear yard. The Commission commented it is against the apparent clear-cutting of the site.



There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Councilman Kashwick, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44pm. The motion passed by acclamation.