



Environmental Commission

October 15, 2013

(Minutes)

Prepared by:

Paul Demarest

Councilman Kashwick called to order, at 8:01pm, the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Environmental Commission for the Borough of Closter, New Jersey, convening Tuesday, October 15, 2013 at Borough Hall.



Attendance

Present

- Steven Isaacson- Full Member
- Thomas Colwell- 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
- Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Associate Member (Historic Preservation Commission Liaison)
- Jaewook Jun- Associate Member

Absent

- Paul MacDonald- Chairman
- Brenda Cummings- Full Member
- VACANT- Alternate #2
- VACANT- Associate Member



Miscellaneous

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

A motion was made by Mr. Di Dio and seconded by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, to approve the minutes for the September 17, 2013 meeting; the motion passed by acclamation.

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

Councilman Kashwick read into the record correspondence received by the Commission, specifically, an advertisement from the *Standard Chair of Gardner, Inc.* which he presumed should have instead been sent to the Shade Tree Commission (STC). He said a letter was received from Kleinfelder East, Inc., the environmental consulting firm handling fuel tank removals/installations at 677 Piermont Road, a former ExxonMobil service station now privately-operated.



Old Business

Trails

Mr. Isaacson said his contact at the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is no longer employed with the organization; he said he will look to others within the Conference to ensure it would assist in developing/maintaining the proposed "Northern Valley Trail System". He noted the Conference previously collaborated on boardwalk projects at the Nature Center.

With respect to installing permanent signage at Scholz Bridge, Mr. Isaacson stated the establishment, Written In Stone (84 Herbert Avenue), could engrave rock or produce plaques, or he offered to obtain additional estimates. Mr. Colwell inquired about the protocol to approaching companies/individuals on doing business with the Commission; Councilman Kashwick replied he should simply say he is inquiring on behalf of the Commission. Mr. Isaacson suggested if the option to engrave was chosen, the Department of Public Works (DPW) should be asked if it retained any boulders unearthed by the Nature Center's recent pond dredging. Mr. Colwell questioned if a client of his who is associated with the Rails-to Trails Conservancy could be useful moving the inter-borough trail project forward; Councilman Kashwick responded such would not but emphasized said contact could be beneficial if the Borough pursued converting the defunct railway owned by CSX Transportation Co. to trails.

Councilman Kashwick said there was no additional information to discuss on the proposed trail segment which would stretch to and from Scholz Bridge.

Mac Bain Farm

Councilman Kashwick indicated further inquiries have been filed regarding the use of motorized vehicles on-site; he explained such activity is forbidden at the Farm. He said the complainants wish not to involve the Police Department, which should be the first option in resolving the matter. Councilman Kashwick stated he and Chairman MacDonald felt the Borough Attorney should write to John Mc Caffrey, caretaker and resident of the Farm, and reiterate to him that no motorized vehicles, other than farm equipment, are permitted off the driveway. Councilman Kashwick was unsure if the vacationing Mary Mayer, co-supervisor of the Farm's volunteers and former Commission member, was abreast of the latest developments on-site but noted she seemed to have absolved herself of the matter. Regardless, Ms. Bouton-Goldberg believed Ms. Mayer should be informed of such actions. Mr. Isaacson reminded that the Borough Administrator, Richard Sheola, had agreed to serve as mediator between the Borough and Mr. Mc Caffrey in such instances so they are viewed as contractual and not police matters.

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg reiterated the Farm would need new signage in the coming year as well as an additional picnic table and bench on-site.

Mr. Isaacson reported that preparations for the Farm's Harvest Festival continue, and he received several rain checks from the supermarket chain, Stop & Shop, for marshmallows, apple cider, etc. He revealed Ms. Mayer was having difficulty acquiring pumpkins (last year's supply came, in part, from D'Amico Flower Farm). Ms. Abrams suggested a churchyard in the Borough of Cresskill may still have pumpkins for sale. Mr. Isaacson said Ms. Cummings is in possession of the postcards he produced to advertise the Festival; Ms. Bouton-Goldberg requested she be supplied with copies to distribute at the Farm. Councilman Kashwick confirmed the event would be held on October 26th with the rain date being October 27th.

Brochure/Flier

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg said the committee established to design the Borough's official

brochure/flier on sustainability has yet to gather.



Liaison Reports

Governing Body

Councilman Kashwick said the Borough's 2014 budget continues to be formulated, and he assumed the Commission's budget will be the range of last year's allocation.

Councilman Kashwick reminded of his concern about inconsistent signage at Borough parks that state the fine imposed for illegal dumping as \$200.00, \$500.00 and \$1,000.00, when the penalty is actually \$2,000.00. He suggested areas located around the A&P supermarket (400 Demarest Avenue), the Saint Mary's School, Convent & Church parking lot (300 High Street), Closter Public Library (280 High Street) and along Tenakill Street be posted with signs. He said he would confer with William Dahle, Superintendent of the (DPW) on the matter. Councilman Kashwick asked that Commission members be cognizant, as they travel throughout the Borough, of additional areas that should be posted to deter dumping.

Councilman Kashwick said the bi-annual Joint Meeting scheduled for October 12th was cancelled due to anticipated poor attendance relating to Columbus Day.

Planning Board

Mr. Di Dio reported the Board continues to hear testimony relating to the application for the redevelopment of "Closter Plaza", with the next meetings taking place on October 17th and October 21st; he felt that depending on the remaining witness list, a Board vote should happen within the next 2 months. Mr. Di Dio said the Borough had a legal victory recently when the Superior Court of New Jersey- Bergen County Lawn Division rejected an appeal made by both A&P Supermarket and a litigious resident (Jesse Rosenblum) and ruled the Borough did not adopt an ordinance increasing the maximum retail space within a building in District #3 (Business) specifically to benefit the applicant in redeveloping the "Closter Plaza".

Shade Tree Commission (STC)

Mr. Scholz stated the STC reviewed its 5-year plan for tree maintenance. Councilman Kashwick informed that the tree removal portion of the Ruckman Park tree planting project had taken place.

Green Team

Mr. Jun said the absent Ms. Cummings continues to spearhead the Borough's effort to become certified by the *Sustainable Jersey* program. He said he consulted with Christine Hageman, chairwoman of the Norwood Environmental Commission, on the 2014 Green Fair. He stated the event would most likely be held on April 26th in the Norwood area but details are still being sorted out. He noted menus are being prepared by prospective vendors.

Mr. Jun reported that the high school student members of the Team went before the Governing Body recently to request the placement of recycling bins in the downtown area and municipal buildings; he said it was receptive to the idea and that a petition having the signatures of 170 to 180 supporters would be forwarded to the Mayor's office. He said the Team members also

attended a recent gathering of the Chamber of Commerce, of which all members are signers of said petition. Mr. Jun said the Chamber suggested the Borough's recycling vendor, Miele Sanitation Co. be asked to provide the percentage of items collected that are ultimately recycled. He said with that knowledge, merchants can be approached to participate in a more vigorous recycling effort. Mr. Isaacson felt the bins should be labeled to indicate the Borough is sponsoring the cause rather than the merchants or Miele Sanitation Co. He questioned if the bins could be purchased with open space funds; Councilman Kashwick replied the municipal or Commission budget would be utilized. Mr. Colwell inquired about the Police Department using the Reverse 911 system to inform residents of the Commission's activities. Councilman Kashwick believed such should be reserved for emergency situations only. Mr. Isaacson reiterated the local school system should be made aware of such efforts to spread the word.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg revealed the HPC is establishing a hall of fame and asked the Commission to submit those residents, current and former, who it feels are worthy of its membership.



New Business

Ms. Abrams inquired about reducing the amount of vehicular idling caused by parents awaiting the dismissal of their children from school; she distributed literature from the Leagues of Women Voters of Glen Rock and Ridgewood as well as Green Faith, which stated that 10 seconds of idling uses more gasoline than turning the ignition. Mr. Colwell responded while there is not a problem during the clement weather, idling may be an issue otherwise if only for the fact that Hillside Elementary School has a limited parking layout; he noted his wife leaves their residence at 2:45pm to pick up their children at 3:10pm. Mr. Jun stated the Green Team brought the issue to the attention of the Board of Education, which has since taken no action. He informed that that while there are 2 main access points at Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest, drivers most often use the front, leading to unnecessary idling and traffic.



Plan Review

The Commission prepared the following administrative reports:

Planning Board

13 Arnold Avenue: This is an application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving the construction of a new 1-family house. Mr. Di Dio stated the design calls for both the property's building and impervious coverage to be at or near the maximum allowed (20% and 30% respectively); he noted a proposed patio appeared not to be calculated into the impervious coverage given. Ms. Abrams questioned if the use of permeable pavement could lessen said figures; Mr. Di Dio replied in the negative because such surfaces become compacted if not properly maintained. The Commission commented using Mr. Di Dio's observations.

40 Homans Avenue: This is an application for Site Plan Approval involving the tenant separation of a non-residential building. Mr. Di Dio stated the proposal is for the 1 tenant space

structure to be divided into 2, with 1 space becoming a bakery/café; he noted the establishment wishes to have 60 seats while occupancy of the 2nd unit is unknown at this time. Mr. Di Dio expressed concern about the limited off-street parking. He suggested more elaborate landscaping be provided in and around the parking lot's wheel stops along Homans Avenue. The Commission commented using Mr. Di Dio's observations.



There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Mr. Di Dio, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31pm. The motion passed by acclamation.