



Environmental Commission

May 17, 2016

(Minutes)

Prepared by:

Paul Demarest

Mr. MacDonald called to order, at 7:57pm, the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Environmental Commission for the Borough of Closter, New Jersey, convening Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at Borough Hall.



2016 Reorganization

Attendance

<PRESENT>

Paul MacDonald- Full Member

Steven Isaacson- Full Member

Sivert Hagen- Full Member

Ethel Abrams- Alternate #1

Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg- Alternate #2/Historic Preservation Commission Liaison

<ABSENT>

Thomas Colwell- Full Member

Sophie Heymann- Full Member/Planning Board Liaison

Brian Stabile- Full Member/Council Liaison

VACANT- Full Member/Shade Tree Commission Liaison

Arthur Goldberg, MD- Associate Member

Election of Officer

A motion was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, to nominate Mr. MacDonald as Chairperson of the Commission retroactive to January 1, 2016. The motion passed (3-0-1):

YES- Bouton-Goldberg/Abrams/Isaacson;

NO- n/a;

ABSTAIN- MacDonald;

LATE ARRIVAL- Hagen;



Miscellaneous

Chairman MacDonald read into the record correspondence received by the Commission, specifically, an application by Miele Sanitation Co. to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for renewing its permit for a solid waste facility with respect to its transfer station (58 & 60 Railroad Avenue). Mr. Isaacson explained such is a formality, but questioned if the renewal included a request for an increase in tonnage to be processed. In reading the application, Chairman MacDonald was surprised that processing on-site would occur from 7:00am to 10:00pm. He noted 250 tons of daily processing is proposed, of which 145 tons would be solid waste, 30 tons of Class A recyclable material and 75 tons of Class B recyclable material; Mr. Isaacson believed Class A and Class B recyclable material consisted of consumable and construction waste respectively. He reiterated a recent Commission discussion about Miele Sanitation Co. not separating recyclable comingled with household garbage because there is no profit in such an endeavor unless it involved cardboard or newspaper.

Chairman MacDonald also said the Commission received a 2015 annual report from Rutgers University's New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension.

Ms. Abrams inquired about the ramifications of the New Jersey Legislature's recent passage of a law prohibiting municipalities from preventing the harboring and proliferation of the European honey bee, which is the state insect. She said the ordinance (Chapter 250-30 of the Borough Code) previously adopted by the Board of Health is no longer valid. The Commission agreed that its former Chairwoman, Elizabeth Ravit, PhD, could help in moving forward on the matter. Mr. Isaacson suggested Ronald Breland, a beekeeper from Rockland County, New York who was featured in the film, Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us?, be contacted for assistance in both educating the public and lobbying the Board to amend its ordinance.

The Commission postponed votes to approve the minutes for both the March 15, 2016 and April 19, 2016 meetings until the June 21, 2016 meeting.

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



Old Business

Trails

Chairman MacDonald said female volunteers for the high school senior service program were to begin laying woodchips on May 16th throughout the trails of Mollicone Park and Schauble Park; he said, however, the Borough Engineer is first reviewing if NJDEP approval would be required since wetlands are in the vicinity. Mr. Isaacson interjected, saying the Borough of Demarest's trail extending from its recycling center to the railroad depot is covered with 6" of woodchips.

Chairman MacDonald said the American Hiking Society's National Trails Day is June 4th and the Closter Nature Center would be holding an event the day after. He suggested Commission members distribute the dated, but various trail maps available to promote the Borough's expanding trail system; he believed the public likely thinks trails do not exist outside the Center. Mr. Isaacson felt the Commission should also provide guided tours of certain trail links, such as Mac Bain Farm or behind the Stop & Shop supermarket (400 Demarest Avenue).

A motion was made by Mr. Isaacson and seconded by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, to have the Commission conduct guided tours throughout the Borough on June 5, 2016 to commemorate National Trails Day. The motion passed (5-0-0):

YES- Bouton-Goldberg/Abrams/Hagen/Isaacson/MacDonald;

NO- n/a;

ABSTAIN- n/a;

Chairman MacDonald said the absent Ms. Heymann had agreed to handle promotion of the anticipated National Trails Day activities.

A motion was made by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg and seconded by Mr. Isaacson, to have the Commission recommend to the Governing Body that 100 additional hours, at a \$25.00 hourly

rate, be allocated to Kevin Riley to complete trail improvements relating to the Recreational Trails Program Grant awarded the Borough in 2014. The motion passed (5-0-0):
YES- Bouton-Goldberg/Abrams/Hagen/Isaacson/MacDonald;
NO- n/a;
ABSTAIN- n/a;

Signage Prohibiting Dumping on Public Land

While the Commission awaits the purchase of permanent metal signage by the Borough, Mr. Isaacson suggested inexpensive corrugated plastic signs, which would cost roughly \$15.00 each, be placed at locations where dumping is prevalent. He reiterated that while he approves of such signage, dumping will not become less frequent until consistent reporting to the Police Department in real time by the engaged public becomes the norm.

Mr. Isaacson said he would revise the sign template he created according to Commission feedback in terms of wording and colors. Chairman MacDonald said the Commission agreed on ordering 20 such signs through open space funds.

A motion was made by Mr. Hagen and seconded by Mr. Isaacson, to have the Commission purchase 6 corrugated plastic lawn signs prohibiting dumping on Borough land and displaying the relevant citation (Chapter 169-8 of the Borough Code) to be situated at various locations throughout the Borough. The motion passed by acclamation.

Fencing Corrections (Mac Bain Farm)

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg report much of the fence rehabilitation has been completed, but she is concerned about there still being too much space between wires that would allow for deer to infiltrate the Farm. She stated the northeast corner of the fence was well-braced and additional wire was added, but clamped instead of being drilled into place. She said the fence has been straightened in most areas. She mentioned there is a section of fence near the residence on-site that has vines growing into it and is pushing the wire downward; Chairman MacDonald responded that volunteers for the high school senior service program could trim away the vine this month.



Liaison Reports

Governing Body

Due to Councilman Stabile's absence, no report was given.

Planning Board

Due to Ms. Heymann's absence, no report was given.

Shade Tree Commission (STC)

In light of there still being no Liaison appointed by the Governing Body for the calendar year 2016, no report was given.

Green Team

Mr. Hagen said Mr. Isaacson agreed to preside over the Team during the Borough's Memorial Day Parade festivities later this month.

He said he attended earth fairs recently in the Borough of Cresskill, the City of Secaucus and at Overpeck County Park in the City of Teaneck as part of his wife's environmental theatrical show (Granny Green's Green Machine).

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg said she finalized a draft of the nomination report for the designation of Mac Bain Farm as a historic landmark; once photographs are included, she said it will be distributed to the Commission for comment.

She said the Borough recently was awarded a non-matching grant for approximately \$30,000.00 to restore the Harold Hess Lustron House (421 Durie Avenue). She stressed, however, a condition of the grant is to have an architect provide an analysis of what rehabilitation is required of the structure as well as maintenance moving forward. She mentioned William Martin, RA, a member of the HPC, recently prepared a document on existing conditions, which can be the basis for a more thorough report required, which would hopefully lessen the associated cost for a design professional.

Ms. Bouton-Goldberg expressed concern about glass insulators being removed from the House during recent electrical service upgrades, causing a sizable hole in the roof. She said she is awaiting a response from the Mayor's office on how to rectify the situation. She reported following a public bid, the Borough finalized a 1-year lease agreement with Michael Pisano (44 Columbus Avenue), a painting contractor, who will serve as the caretaker of the House in exchange for use of 1 of its bedrooms as an office; she noted the HPC would also be permitted to open the House to the public as a sort of museum several times during the year.



New Business

2017 Northern Valley Earth Fair

Michael Swan, 201 8th Street, Cresskill, New Jersey, introduced himself as the Co-Chairperson of Cresskill's Environmental Commission, who has spearheaded the annual Northern Valley Earth Fair since 2014, and for 3 years prior to that, the Cresskill Earth Fair. He stated he is relocating to Wisconsin as part of his employment with AT&T, Inc. He explained that the Northern Valley Earth Fair was created when the Boroughs of Norwood and Old Tappan joined Cresskill as organizers, followed by the Borough of Tenafly in 2015. He revealed the event has grown each year, with 2016 having 105+ exhibitors/vendors and approximately 70 last year. Mr. Swan said it is customary for the organizers to hold a post-Fair meeting to explore how to improve the event, noting evaluation forms are distributed to the exhibitors/vendors; he explained at said meeting, a municipality other than the prior host, is selected for the upcoming year so to not overburden 1 municipality with costs and manpower associated with hosting duties. While not actively-participating in 2016, Chairman MacDonald said Closter contributed \$250.00 towards the Fair. Mr. Swan concurred, saying the event makes a small profit (seed money) through recommended sponsorships from municipalities to ensure the Fair continues in the future. He said while less money can be contributed by a municipality, more volunteerism is then expected. Mr. Swan continued saying that throughout the year, organizers (members of Environmental Commissions and Green Teams) convene monthly meetings to schedule and prepare for the upcoming Fair; he noted attendance is usually about 15 people. He said while there is an actual

handwritten guide consisting of historical notes on the organization of past Fairs, such information is now inputted to Google Sheet, a web-based spreadsheet.

Mr. Swan stated some exhibitors/vendors pay or work during the Fair on the barter system. He explained, for example, his employer has been a sponsor for 6 years without ever donating money because such is prohibited in the corporation's by-laws; he noted his employer did donate 1 year when the event was partnered with an educational foundation recognized as a 501(c) organization. He said, as a representative of AT&T, Inc., he buys 200 to 400 bottles of water for the Fair, which has a value to it; he noted his employer also provides foam board signs and banners to promote the event. Mr. Swan stated other sponsors provide gift certificates, compost bins, etc.

Mr. Swan said the hosting municipality appoints 1 of its officials/residents as liaison to hopefully expedite any local licensing/permitting requirements in holding the event. He said the liaison also coordinates the monthly meetings and sets the agenda. He further commented that several committees are established, each of which concentrates on a specific aspect of the Fair. Mr. Swan noted that despite his moving out-of-state, he was asked and accepted to continue the Fair's website for 2017 along with some of the electronic and poster-related items being he owns the artwork; he said he agreed to do so for a small fee, which would essentially be reimbursement for his out of pocket expenses relating to web domain and software costs for hosting the website.

Mr. Swan revealed it was his hope that Closter would host the Fair in 2017, noting Old Tappan would be the 2nd choice. Chairman MacDonald questioned if Closter had an indoor venue in the event of inclement weather. Mr. Swan replied that only Cresskill has had to make use of its large community center due to rain. He said the Fair is always advertised as a rain or shine event, though a rain date could be optional; he cautioned while some sponsors may be against such, the donation is applicable regardless of weather. Ms. Abrams pointed out the Teaneck Creek Conservancy recently held an event which had a rain date and 1 of its sponsors was Holy Name Medical Center.

Chairman MacDonald questioned if Closter had a venue with adequate parking. Mr. Swan responded part of being the host is selecting a location which can handle both attendees and visitors; he hoped, however, the environmental theme of the event would equate to less vehicular traffic. Ms. Abrams suggested the parking lot of the Closter Plaza shopping center, once redeveloped, could be a venue if the event were on Sunday; Mr. Isaacson disagreed, saying many establishments in the Plaza would not be affected by Bergen County's blue laws and also that a more "green" location is optimal. He believed the Nature Center, Ruckman Park, Schauble Park or Memorial Park were a better alternative, though the active parks would require Recreation Commission approval. He also mentioned Hillside Elementary School as a possibility, particularly its field, though the Board of Education's approval would not be easy. Mr. Isaacson revealed that Hillside's field is virtually unusable by its students because during several construction projects that enlarged its facilities, contractors apparently stripped the school grounds of its good soil and imported junk fill; he said as the grass grew, large rocks began to appear at the surface. He further commented Hillside's gymnasium and bathrooms could be utilized as well, but such would likely require overtime for custodians needed to provide building access. Chairman MacDonald said portable toilets are an option. Mr. Swan stressed the importance of involving the local school system. Mr. Hagen doubted he could serve as a liaison given the amount of time required. Mr. Swan understood, but said being 4 other municipalities assist the host, less effort is required of the liaison unlike when Cresskill operated

its own event. He stated Susan Rowley, Treasurer of Cresskill’s Environmental Commission, would be handling most of his duties once he moves.

Ms. Abrams said she recently went to a mobile paper shredding event in Cresskill sponsored by the Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA); Mr. Swan informed that approximately 11 tons of paper had been shredded. He noted the BCUA provided the truck/shredder and the only requirement of Cresskill was to welcome all County residents. He stated it is not wise to hold a shredding event during the Fair because there would be an increase in vehicular traffic and a lot of noise emanating from the shredder.

Mr. Swan said every year the Fair has had live music. He said Cresskill had to rent a stage through Bergen County, noting Closter benefits by having its own bandshell at Memorial Park. He explained that if renting from the County, an early reservation should be made especially being those persons hauling the stage to the event must become certified in doing so along with there being insurance requirements. He surmised electrical cables would be required to operate equipment; he noted portable generator(s) could be an option if there is no power source. He said propane tanks could be used for cooking. He believed the host municipality should be able to provide a 10’x15’ area for each exhibitor/vendor.

Mr. Swan said he would be in New Jersey until the end of July for any follow-up questions from the Commission.

Mr. Isaacson said he would contact the Superintendent of Closter Public Schools, Joanne Newberry, about the availability of Hillside Elementary School and its field for Earth Day 2017, which falls on a Sunday. He suggested the Commission reach out to the Recreation Commission for any scheduling conflicts with its spring sports programs.



Plan Review

The Commission prepared the following administrative report(s):

Planning Board

63 Closter Dock Road: This is an application for Major Soil Movement Approval involving the construction of a new 1-family house. The Commission had no comments.



Adjournment

Ms. Abrams questioned how often the Borough’s website is visited. Mr. Isaacson replied the Borough’s Information Technology (IT) Coordinator should be posed the question, noting the system must be equipped with analytics.

Mr. Hagen inquired about future redevelopment at 81 Eckerson Avenue, which is vacant following the demolition of a 1-family house; the Commission had no status on such. He also asked about 18 Taillon Terrace, which involves a 1-family house being renovated; Chairman MacDonald stated the construction project seemed to be taking especially long to complete.

There being no further items to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg and seconded by Ms. Abrams, to adjourn the meeting at 9:18pm. The motion passed by acclamation.