

**Readington Township
Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes
July 11, 2023**

OPEN MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hendrickson at 7:06 p.m. stating that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting had been duly advertised.

Members in Attendance

Neil Hendrickson - Chair
Robert Becker
Jeff Charney
Jerry Cook
Steve Foster
Jonathan Heller
Susan Masinda
Mario Orlandi

Members Absent

Cassandra Ward

Minutes

Mr. Cook moved and Ms. Masinda seconded, to approve the minutes for June 6, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speaker

None

LOI/Freshwater Wetlands

None

AOC (Areas of Concern)

None

Correspondence

1. NJDEP LOI-LV Extension - B. 36 Lots 5, 5.02, 5.04:
Members discussed the project planned for this site. They plan on making recommendations to the developers as to what will be needed regarding the tree inventory/sampling. A discussion ensued with regard to heritage trees.

New Business

1. PSE&G Easement near Silver Bit and Spur:

It was stated that gullies exist in the paddock that runs directly into Holland Brook. An RC&D grant was obtained to rehab this space, but it hasn't been done yet. It was reported that approximately 75% of the trees that were planted were lost due to flooding. Chair Hendrickson ran into a PSE&G representative who stated that they would restore the silt fence, hay bales, and landscape fabric that they previously installed, and that was subsequently lost to extreme runoff. Chair Hendrickson will reach out to the representative and meet with him on the site.

2. Masinda Stream Restoration Project

The stream that was restored is a headwater and tributary to the Rockaway. The contributing agencies to the project were: NRCS, DEP, Fish and Wildlife, and NOAA. A photo was taken with representatives from the agencies and Ms. Masinda at the location of the stream with the Happy Fish symbol. The happy fish is a symbol that belongs to the World Fish Migration Foundation and is used in recognition of efforts to restore streams for fish migration.

3. Community Solar Presentation

Mr. Becker gave a presentation on this program. Over the past five (5) years, New Jersey has been running this pilot program that gives communities the opportunity to own and run their own solar field. It allows the residents to purchase a share in the field and apply it to their utility bill. Mr. Becker described the process and different options available to interested communities. It is also an action item for Sustainable Jersey. It was mentioned that the township has an ordinance against solar fields. It was suggested to research the ordinance to see if it should be modified to allow something like this program. It was stated that the schools have a desire to increase their solar capacity as they have had great success with their solar project thus far.

Other Business:

1. Purchase items with the EC Logo

Chair Hendrickson spoke with Darrows sporting goods store (in an effort to keep things local) about applying the logo to hats and shirts. Members discussed what items they would like. It was suggested that a T-shirt be ordered for the student who created the logo.

2. Tree Ordinance Update

Chair Hendrickson has been working on updating the ordinance. It is fully compliant with the State DEP tree ordinance draft and is more restrictive than the State's. The final revision was submitted to the Land Use Director. It was stated that they will wait to finalize it until the State finalizes their draft. It was suggested to pass the ordinance in an effort to be proactive and revise later if necessary.

3. Recycling – Dual Stream Fact Sheet

Members discussed current recycling (single stream) and the costs of options available/desired for future recycling contracts. It was asked how much of the recycling actually gets recycled versus being taken to the landfill. Mr. Becker described the process and there is currently no way to know how much is being recycled. Members discussed the recycling bid process.

4. Recycling Contract Update

The Bid document is ready to go out. There are multiple options – single and dual stream – that came up in discussions regarding this contract. It is expected that the township will receive the first bids by mid-September. The members discussed the requirement of disclosing the percentage of what gets recycled versus what goes to the landfill and how this data gets reported. The current process doesn't allow for this data to be obtained.

Site Plan Review and Comment

Block 18 Lot 19 – 58 Old Highway Route 28
Appl# ZB22-010- “D” Variance -Addition

This is a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) review which is unusual for the EC to review. It was determined that this application is incomplete and the members will withhold comment until it is complete.

Public Comment

Mr. Roth, a member of the public, commented on trees that might be planted in relation to the Community Solar project. He asked, with regard to the recycling contract, if the lowest bidder automatically wins. It was stated that the lowest *qualified* bidder is the winner.

Mr. Charney asked about the status of EV chargers in the community. Members discussed what is happening at a national and local level regarding this topic as well as grant opportunities that will be available in the future and future sites where charges could be installed.

Mr. Heller reported that he was contacted by a resident who received a bill due to bamboo growing on a neighboring property. Members discussed bamboo and other invasive species and what, if anything, can be done to control it through an ordinance.

Mr. Foster reported on a topic regarding the restoration of natural fields and meadows that require natural seed that is not available in large quantities. A seed foundation is looking for volunteers who can grow locally grown grasses, harvest the seed and make that seed available to others who are trying to recapture those lands. He suggested working with Open Space. It was mentioned that there is a meadows management sub-committee who could be tapped into. It also may be a grant worthy project. Mr. Foster will do more research.

Adjournment

It was the consensus of the commission members to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Radziewicz
Advisory Boards Secretary