

## February 27, 2023, Environmental Commission Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Duerr, Link, McCarthy, Stippick  
MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Duerr, Brandt, Kohute  
ALTERNATES ABSENT: Cavone  
LIAISONS PRESENT: Keen  
LIAISONS ABSENT: Marsh  
GUESTS PRESENT: Debbie Barsotti, Mindy Curran, Roger Duerr, Barbara Halpern, Sarah Harrison, Bill Petrovich, and Al Wheeler.

The February 27, 2023, meeting of the Township of Franklin Environmental Commission was both a live meeting in the municipal building conference room and a virtual meeting on Zoom. It was called to order by Mr. Stippick at 7:37 pm.

- I. Minutes:** The minutes of the November 24, 2022, meeting were never approved. Therefore, upon a motion by Mr. Stippick, seconded by Ms. M. Duerr, the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Minutes of the January 23, 2023, meeting omitted Bill Petrovich's name as a Guest at the meeting. In addition, Mr. Keen asked that the last three sentences in the section under **V. D. Township Communications** be reworded to read: "Mr. Keen explained that he was advised that there's no legal requirement for some committees to post agendas and minutes. Nor are committees required to follow Roberts Rules of Order. He is looking into both these regulations." With these changes, upon a motion by Mr. Stippick, seconded by Ms. M. Duerr, the minutes of the January 23, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved.

- II. Guests:** There were no specific issues raised by any of the Guests present.

- III. Emergency Response and Management Report:** There were two reports from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP):

- A. Incident ID: #854602: There was a motor oil spill on Feb. 7, 2023, of approximately 35 gallons in the area of Rt 40 and Porchtown Rd., due to an accident between two tractor trailers and a box truck. The spill is in the process of being cleaned up.
- B. Incident ID: #855497: A 30-gallon spill from a 275-gallon aboveground oil tank occurred at the Girl Scout Camp on Victoria Ave. on February 10, 2023, due to overfilling. No waterways were affected. The cleanup is pending.

- IV. Applications:** There was one Zoning Board application:

- A. ZB 23-01: HiBlend LLC is seeking a D variance for use of a site at 1654 Catawba Ave. (block 7002/lot 11) on which to construct a 2,500 sq.ft. building for cannabis cultivation, along with a 2,500 sq.ft. manufacturing facility, both to be installed within a 20,000 sq.ft. building. In addition, a 3,500 sq.ft. administrative building and related parking would be erected on the site. Questions/concerns raised by the Environmental Commission included:
- What are the disposal arrangements for the water in which plants will be grown, which will have nutrients in it? Will there be an impact on groundwater?
  - How many and what type of vehicles will be used for distribution?
  - The application suggests that the company will be seeking to get approval to grow medical marijuana. If they succeed, what expansion of the building will be necessary? What do they

plan for the future?

- Will there be security lighting and, if so, it should be designed for low impact on the night sky.

## V. Old Business:

### A. Piney Hollow:

1. **NJDEP Green Acres Trail grant:** Ms. Halpern reported that the CME engineer, Ed Diamonte, replied to the Pinelands Commission in January. The Commission then has 90 days in which to respond. Hopefully, the Commission's request for information on stormwater will be satisfied by the CME reply because we have only until this fall of 2023 to finish everything that the grant is to cover. If approval for the shifted trail is not received, Franklin Will have to go back to the boardwalk plan and get that more costly option installed. In the meantime, we could be carrying out the other required parts of the grant – the cleanups.

Mr. Keen requested that all the documents be sent to him, which Ms. Halpern will do. Mr. Keen will talk to Ed Diamonte first. Then, a meeting to get everyone together about this project could help. The danger is that if Franklin doesn't complete this project, Green Acres will not fund any future applications from the Township, including any for active recreation as well as for our parks and preserved areas.

2. **Beavers:** Mr. Stippick reported that only dike three is passable at all. The first two dikes are completely covered with fallen trees, due to the beavers. Mr. Stippick contacted Unexpected Refuge to ask about their means of reducing beaver damage. Unexpected does not do anything to prevent the beavers from felling trees. They simply remove trees that have fallen.

### B. Malaga Lake Park:

1. Mr. Stippick will be making a flyer for the park cleanup on April 22. The event will also include maintenance of the wildflower garden. Mr. Stippick will contact the Watershed Ambassador for our area. The Ambassadors have provided good manpower for past events.
2. Ms. McCarthy reported that she talked to Deanna in Franklin's Public Works Dept. about creating signs for Malaga Lake Park. Deanna will get back to her about them. Mr. Stippick advised that there could be a problem with using a QR code to access a pdf file on the website. Ms. McCarthy will check on this. One sign should say: "Nature Trail/Point phone camera at QR code to download Trail Guide" and the other, to be installed at the main parking lot, should say "Woodland Nature Trail" with an arrow pointing toward the woods.

- C. **ANJEC Request to Present:** At the last EC meeting, Mr. Stippick advised that he had been contacted about having a presentation from ANJEC about the Highlands. He replied in the affirmative, but it turned out that the ANJEC staff member, Hannah Katz, had confused our township with the Franklin Township in Warren County. Those folks would certainly have more interest in a presentation pertaining to the Highlands.

## VI. New Business:

- A. **ANJEC (the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions):** Mr. Stippick advised that ANJEC will be having several training sessions, all of which are free to our Commission. The Fundamentals of Environmental Commissions is virtual and will be held on March 21, March 22, and March 23. There are

five sessions in all that include EC powers and responsibilities, updating the ERI, reading site plans, learning about the current stormwater rules, and green infrastructure. On March 23 at noon is the session on the Municipal Master Plan and ordinances. In addition, on April 1, there will be an in-person advanced EC training on strategies and networking. See Mr. Stippick's email of Feb. 23 for the ANJEC notice.

- B. Access to Storage:** Ms. McCarthy requested the code to the lock on the old ambulance building on Main Road so that we can get into our Environmental Commission files and get our display and educational materials when we need them. Currently she must arrange to meet someone from Public Works every time she needs access. She was told by Public Works that Mr. Daubenspeck, Chair of the Recreation Commission, does not want to share that code. She will compose a letter to our Township Clerk for Mr. Stippick to sign, making this a formal request.
- C. EC Annual Report:** Mr. Stippick emailed the final Annual Report for 2022 to everyone. He also forwarded it to Rosemary who was very helpful and efficient in her assistance to the Commission, and she forwarded it to the Planning Board.
- D. Moth Event:** Mr. Stippick has been communicating with Frances Mundrick, a graduate student at Rowan University who is also in touch with Ms. McCarthy, about a 24-hour BioBlitz at Alcyon Park in Pitman on June 10. The Bioblitz will run from June 10 at 7 am to June 11 at 7 am. Ms. Mundrick is organizing the event and there will be citizen-scientists leading groups on specific topics (trees, flowering plants, etc.), using the iNaturalist app. Mr. Stippick will conduct a moth/nocturnal insects session at about 8 pm.

**VII. Mail:** There was one notification from the Pinelands Commission, dated February 14, 2023, of a Consistency Determination granting approval to Kenneth Christopher Jr. for a septic system permit from the Gloucester County Health Dept. for his property at block 5901/lot 28.

**VIII. Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Ms. McCarthy, seconded by Ms. M. Duerr and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne McCarthy, Acting Secretary.

**The next meeting of the Environmental Commission is on Monday, March 27, 7:30 pm. It will be both a live meeting in the Municipal Bldg. conference room and a Zoom meeting.**