

Harrison Township Environmental Commission  
114 Bridgeton Pike  
Mullica Hill, NJ 08062  
Phone: 856-478-411

Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2008

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Present: Phil Grous, Jim Woods, Bob Manson, Luke Oman, Jeff Summerton

The monthly meeting of the Harrison Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on January 16, 2008, at the Harrison Township Municipal Building, the Commissioner, Phil Grous, being in the chair.

Phil Grous announced that Phil Rhudy resigned from the Commission. The Commission now has three vacancies.

Public Attendance: Two members of the public were in attendance: Elliott Heisman regarding the 322 by-pass and Vincent Gangemi regarding the Harris Landfill and the Mullica Hill Pond project.

With respect to the 322 by-pass project, the Commission is aware that there is potential for encroachment on some wetlands. However, until there are blueprints and/or designs on paper detailing the course and exactly where and how it will be accomplished, there is nothing on which to comment. Once the alignment is known and the application and plans are in, the Commission can address the environmental impact of the project. Three public meetings will be conducted by Gloucester County once the plans are in.

One of the areas that may be affected by the by-pass is Mill Race Farms. It was noted that this area is now under the protection of the Non-Game and Endangered Species Program / Endangered and Non-Game Species Conservation Act. These acts are affording protection to the bog turtle, swamp pinks and nestings of the red shouldered hawk, among other flora and fauna.

The Mullica Hill Pond reclamation project was discussed. Jim Woods relayed that the Township wants to bring the pond back as a recreational area for fishing and possibly small boats. The next Pond Committee meeting will take place during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February. A presentation will be made by Princeton Hydro who have done studies on the soil and sediment, dredging and performed water analysis. There will also be information presented about a potential aeration system for the pond which will inject more oxygen in the water to foster growth in the fish population.

Luke Oman advised that the Township applied for a grant for funding for walking trails on Township-owned land adjacent to the Pond and additional Open Lands around Harrison Township. The Township owns approximately five acres around the pond; there are also private landowners whose property goes to the edge of the pond. We will find out in September, 2008 whether the grant was approved. The South Jersey Land and Water Trust is willing to supply approximately 500-600 hours of voluntary labor over the course of two years to assist in the trail construction. There is also the possibility of

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recruiting students from Environmental Clubs in the local high school to volunteer to help with trail construction as well. Mr. Gangemi pointed out that creation of trails in some of these dense areas will require the use of heavy equipment which may be quite costly. Also, there has been significant opposition to the construction of trails in Mullica Hill in the past.

Jeff Summerton expressed concern about the trails and whether provisions will be made for the protection of the property of private landowners.

The Henry Harris landfill closure was discussed. Bob Manson reported that a sub-committee of the planning board met with 2 NJDEP representatives regarding the closure plan. A ground water contamination testing program will be initiated in the next quarter with all costs to be borne by the landfill owner. The sub-committee also met with five companies who responded to the Planning Board's "Request for Proposals" for an independent environmental expert to review the closure documents and testing results of the Harris landfill. Current testing is being done by Pennoni Associates. The sub-committee will present its findings to the Planning Board at the 2/7/08 meeting as to whether an independent contractor should be hired and their recommendation on which company best fits the job requirements. This company will not perform actual testing, only review of the closing plan and testing results found thus far. *If they find any improprieties, the Township may be required to hire an independent testing company.* The Environmental Commission endorses the hiring of an independent environmental expert. **SEE RESTATEMENT IN MARCH 24, 2008 MINUTES.**

The Environmental Commission has some concerns with respect to the landfill fill acceptability reports provided by Pennoni Associates. Representatives from Pennoni indicated they would attend the 1/16/08 EC meeting to explain and answer questions about the Alternative Fill Acceptance Criteria (AFAC), however, they did not come to the meeting. The Environmental Commission will inform Township Committee and the Planning Board of its concern that Pennoni representatives have, several times, reneged on their agreement to meet with us to discuss these reports.

Anticipated septic ordinance - The Environmental Commission has lost several members who had been active in preparing a statement on the Planning Board's request for comment on the anticipated "septic ordinance". We are in the process of reacquiring the information necessary to submit our recommendation.

The following mail was received by the EC Commission:

1. 2 letters of transmittal from Pennoni Associates, Inc., to the Township regarding Fill Material Acceptability were received.
2. 11/30/07 information packet from Phil Rhudy with information on alternative fuel powered vehicles.
3. 11/30/07 letter from NJDEP to B. Horne re HHL – notice of deficiency – groundwater, missing data.
4. 12/05/07 letter from ARH Engineers requesting letters of interpretation – wetlands.
5. 12/06/07 letter from BH Consulting Engineers re connection of new sewer to Township sewer line.
6. 12/12/07 letter from JCM Environmental requesting letters of interpretation – wetlands.
7. 01/15/08 letter from Arsenault Env. Cons requesting application for interpretation – transition area.
8. 01/15/08 letter from Wadd. Plann. Surv. requesting application for interpretation – wetlands.

Site plan reviews:

1. Block 69, Lot 1 (54 S. Main St. – Weichert parking lot) – The EC notes that the paving of an area which may include tree roots cuts off the saturation of water to the tree which may lead to the eventual demise of the tree. The Historic Preservation Committee is also reviewing this plan. Additional information about the parking lot will be presented to HPC at their March meeting. The EC will note its concern to the Planning Board.

In its effort to communicate with the public on environmental issues, the Chair has enlisted some of the members to write articles for publication in various public forums, e.g. the Township website and/or included in the township newsletter. Articles on the honeybee crisis, Rachel Carson and effect of Carbon Dioxide on climate change are planned. There are also some other local publications, such as Spiceline, the quarterly newsletter for Spicer Estates residents where we may be able to publish these articles.

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The Commission would like to use the observance of Arbor Day and/or Earth Day as tools to enlighten the community about environmental issues. As the Township is consistently acquiring land to maintain the Open Space, a suggestion was made to encourage the planting of trees in these areas as trees are important absorbers of CO<sub>2</sub> and then replenish the oxygen in the air. We can possibly tie in this tree-planting to either of the above days.

The EC has begun planning for its booth at Harrison Township Day. Doris Brady, Phil Grous and Jim Woods have formed a sub-committee to work on this project.

A motion was made by Bob Manson for approval of the November, 2007 minutes. The motion was seconded by Luke Oman and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Jim Woods to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Phil Grous. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.