

Present: Phil Grous, Stan Hershey, Jim Woods, Bob Manson, Doris Brady, Luke Oman, Jeff Summerton

The monthly meeting of the Harrison Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:35 p.m. on March 5, 2008, at the Harrison Township Municipal Building, the Commissioner, Phil Grous, being in the chair.

Public Attendance: Four Harrison Township residents with an interest in joining the Environmental Commission attended the meeting. While their professional backgrounds were diverse, all of the candidates expressed genuine interest in protecting our environment. The Commission has three openings – two alternate positions and one member position. Phil Grous, on behalf of all the Commission members, will make a recommendation to the Township Committee to fill these vacant spots after the Commission votes on the candidates.

RESTATEMENT: *At the January, 2008 meeting of the Harrison Township Environmental Commission, there was a discussion of the “Fill Acceptability Reports” for the Henry Harris Landfill. Due to a lack of understanding of terminology in the reports and an inability to get further clarification, a statement was made at that meeting that implied that “improprieties” might exist. We have now received an explanation of these reports and we are satisfied that due diligence is in place to ensure the safe closure of the landfill and regret the implication of any “improprieties”.*

The Henry Harris landfill closure was discussed. The Environmental Commission has been concerned regarding the fill material acceptability levels at the Landfill. The Township Planning Board has been considering hiring an independent environmental consultant to review the closure plan and testing results at the landfill. The EC has now received enough information regarding the AFAC and is satisfied that there are no excessive contaminant levels in the fill materials.

Bob Manson reported that the Township is considering approval for an additional review/enforcement person to work as a municipal representative alongside Pennoni's engineers.

This Commission will consider appointing a “point person” from its members to disseminate information about the landfill. The EC will do its best to keep the public informed and will be finalizing the second landfill closure pamphlet for distribution in the near future.

A landfill closure project of this size is projected to last for 8-10 years. The first stage is in place – the fill coming in at this time will be placed and allowed to settle and compact;

compaction of the soil will be studied to determine the potential for seepage. The next stages of the Landfill closure will depend on the analysis of these compaction studies.

On the 322 by-pass project it has been reported that the County released engineering plans submitted to the DEP for approval which show exactly where the route will go and also looks at alternative routing. This Commission will not be in a position to comment until site plans are provided showing the impact on the flora, fauna and wetlands in the proposed route.

Bob Manson reported on behalf of the Planning Board. Most of the Board's environmental concerns at this time are related to the landfill. The Route 322 Wawa has applied to the DEP to put in underground storage tanks. Approval is pending.

The Planning Board has again been asked to review the re-opening of a gas station at the intersection of Mill Road and Main Street. The Township Committee instructed the Planning Board to ask the owners to present a concept demonstrating that the building will conform to the Historic Preservation Committee's requirements. If the Planning Board agrees with the concept, the owners must submit a site plan that addresses the ingress and egress.

Luke Oman reported on the Mullica Hill Pond and proposed trails. At the February 6 meeting of the Pond Committee, Princeton Hydro provided results of their testing, most of which was positive for pond reclamation. One of Pond's main problems was identified as excessive phosphorous levels which causes high algae levels. Luke thinks that it is possible that a significant portion of the phosphorous is of natural origin from the surrounding soil however, further testing might be need to be done to confirm this. Another issue is that the pond is very shallow. Dredging would be acceptable and the dredge sediment was found to be of good quality with no contamination. But dredging is costly.

With regard to the proposed trails, Luke reiterated that grant award notification will not be available until September.

Jim Woods attended a meeting with the Gloucester County Economic Development Council regarding joint municipality projects which could result in financial savings for all involved. Jim suggested to the EC that maybe a joint agreement could be reached with neighboring municipalities for walking trails.

The next Pond Committee meeting is scheduled for March 24.

Phil Grous commented on the EC's continuing efforts to provide environmental information to the public. Phil noted that ANJEC offers sample press releases on

environmental issues that local environmental commissions are encouraged to place in local media outlets. Stan Hershey reminded everyone that anything we would like to publish in the local media should be reviewed by the Township Solicitor prior to publication.

The article Jeff Summerton wrote on honeybee colony collapse disorder will be published in the Township's Spring newsletter.

Luke Oman completed an article on compact fluorescent light bulbs and Phil Grous is near completion on an article about Rachel Carson. The EC will look into ways to pass this information on to the Township residents.

Two sets of site plans were reviewed.

1. Lot 29, Block 14.09 – 16 Lange Court. A large garage and driveway were built at this location and portions extend into wetland areas and encroach on the next lot. The owners are asking for an exemption based on economic waste if they are directed to remove the garage. Municipal records indicate that the garage was built without proper permitting or variances. A motion was made by Stan Hershey for the EC to send a memo to the Planning Board as there are concerns about the wetlands encroachment. The motion was seconded by Jim Woods and unanimously approved.

2. Lot 16, Block 45 – Route 322 adjacent to the Harrison House Diner – These plans were submitted by Robert Pacilli Homes for approximately 199 age-restricted single family homes. This project is still in the preliminary stages and will go before the Zoning Board on March 27. The environmental impact study was reviewed by Chairman Grous prior to the EC meeting. After plan review a motion was made by Doris Brady for the Environmental Commission to request clarification on the need disturb 800 square feet of wetlands. The motion was seconded by Bob Manson. Jim Woods abstained from the final vote and the remaining EC members unanimously approved the motion.

The EC discussed its booth at Harrison Township Day. Phil Grous is soliciting the Mullica Hill ShopRite to donate some "Earthwise Green Bags" for a giveaway at the booth. Time slots for set-up, staffing and break-down of the booth were assigned. The EC subcommittee for Harrison Township Day (Phil Grous, Doris Brady and Luke Oman) will meet on March 12 to discuss other ways to encourage people to stop at the booth.

Phil Grous, Stan Hershey and Luke Oman will be attending the Mayors Breakfast on March 15 to represent the Environmental Commission. Department heads of various Township offices, committees and commissions were invited to one of the four breakfast meetings.

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Jim Woods reported that the Township Committee approved funding to have the State spray for gypsy moths in the Township. If a second spray is required this Commission agrees with Mr. Woods that the Township should engage the services of a spraying company instead of letting this financial burden fall on individual residents. Doris Brady suggested that this Commission should inquire as to any effects the spraying may have when humans are exposed and Phil Grous will check with Carole Rieck for information on the spraying material.

A motion was made by Bob Manson for approval of the February, 2008 minutes. The motion was seconded by Stan Hershey and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Stan Hershey to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Doris Brady and the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.