

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

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(Approved at August 31, 2016 Meeting)

Minutes of August 4, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Leon Lakritz. Also attending tonight's meeting were Vicky Binetti, John Boyer, Lola Pellegrino, Jodi Smith, Russ Price, Ann Culkin and Anne Hastings. The minutes of the July 7, 2016 meeting were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Treasurer Harry Larzelere, Leon Lakritz gave the budget report. He stated that a balance of \$1, 233.01 remain in our account as of 8/04/16.

Old Business

Workshop Meeting

A workshop meeting was held on July 21, 2016. Leon Lakritz reported that the application of Fishpond Equities (Fishpond & Hurffville–Cross Keys Road) was discussed. They proposed constructing three buildings (medical/office) on a site which previously was an orchard, with a residence and several small building structures. The Environmental Commission agreed that it was acceptable to waive the Environmental Impact Statement, as the Environmental Impact Worksheet was thorough. The status of soil remediation (for historic pesticide contamination) had not been reported. Other issues for comment included the lack of a tree removal compensation proposal, need for follow-up to several outstanding environmental concerns identified in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, and lack of incorporation of nonstructural strategies in the storm water management plan.

Recycling/America Recycles Day

America Recycles Day will be held on Tuesday, November 15. The theme for 2016 is "Be Recycled." Vicky Binetti will work with the schools in an effort to engage student participation. Mr. Jeffrey Pollock, the principal of Hurffville Elementary School has expressed interest in sponsoring

recycling related activities. Leon Lakritz and Ann Culkin volunteered to serve on the America Recycles Day committee. Vicky also shared with the Commission several recycling activities taken from the America Recycles Day website that could possibly be implemented in the school program.

Planning Calendar

Leon Lakritz had no new events to include on the Planning Calendar.

Earth Day 2017

Earth Day next year will be celebrated on Saturday, April 22, 2017. Leon Lakritz suggested contacting Lisa Collins to reserve the date and secure a pavilion in the Park for Environmental Commission activities. Vicky Binetti asked Commission members to come up with some new ideas to include in next year's Earth Day program.

Sustainable Jersey

Vicky Binetti reviewed the current Action Inventory, listing a number of Township ordinances, programs or activities that appear to meet many of the criteria for a bronze certification in the Sustainable Jersey program. Vicky also discussed additional projects that the Township is currently working on or has completed and/or projects that could be done to receive points for certification. The Green Team Advisory Committee is currently in the process of designing a logo and setting up a website for the program. Vicky is providing Commission members with copies of the Green Team Advisory Committee meetings, the next one of which is September 12, 2016.

Clean Up Day

Ann Culkin reminded the Commission that Clean Up Day will be held on Saturday, October 8 (rain date October 15). She suggested we start to canvas and determine which sites in the Township are littered and are in greatest need of clean up. It was noted that several properties adjacent to heavily traveled roads will be excluded from the clean-up list unless police protection can be provided. The mayor's office will be contacted to ascertain whether Township funds are available to defray the cost of employing police for traffic control. Anne Hastings also said that quite a few 3-4 year old children participate, and she plans to assign them to American Blvd. where there are no traffic safety issues. A discussion followed on how best to fund Clean Up Day.

New Business

Fishpond Equities

This project is located on Fishpond-Hurffville Cross Keys Road (across from Bloomers) and was discussed at our workshop meeting in July. Applicant plans to build three office buildings, tenants to be determined. Nearby residents voiced numerous concerns at the Planning Board meeting on August 2: Density of construction (three office buildings too many for the size of the site); insufficient buffering between residential homes and the proposed office buildings; and traffic safety issues due to the location of entrances and egress. John Boyer pointed out that the roadways in question are County-roads and are therefore controlled exclusively by the County. It was noted that the Commission recommended that efforts be made to save several established older trees.

United Development

This project was heard by the Planning Board on August 2. The United Development Company project is located at the United Artists theatre complex. The theatre was originally constructed with a seating capacity of over 3000 seats and approximately 1000 parking spaces. The theatre has been redesigned to downsize the seating capacity, therefore reducing the number of parking spaces required. A new entrance will be constructed onto the by-pass road. This property is located in a wellhead protection area and therefore subject to all the conditions and restrictions which apply as well as to storm water management requirements. Two restaurants are proposed, and applicant is attempting to secure a liquor license. A sidewalk will be constructed on Tuckahoe Road but no internal sidewalks will be installed in the theatre parking lot.

Turnersville Development Associates

This project is located near the Target store, on the Black Horse Pike (formerly home to a Bob Evans restaurant). The application was heard by the Planning Board on August 2. The restaurant will be razed and the location will be re-developed as a retail building with five occupants. Landscaping will remain mostly unchanged. Applicant is cutting down two trees and will compensate by planting three trees. There is a basin on the south side of the site, and there will be no impact on the existing storm water retention basin. An Environmental Impact Statement was not provided; however, given that the site was already developed, and that the proposed structure and conditions would be similar to the existing situation, the Environmental Commission did not object to waiving the requirement for an EIS. The Commission recommended that the applicant prepare an Environmental Impact Worksheet.

Turnersville Equities

This application will be reviewed at a Zoning Board work session on August 10. The developers propose to construct three free standing buildings: 5,600, 11,600 and 36,000 square feet on a property currently designated as Block 112.01, Lots 12, 12.01 and 12.04. (The applicants were previously granted variances for commercial uses on the segments of these lots that are zoned Rural/Residential; the balance of the lots, with frontage on the Black Horse Pike, are zoned Highway Commercial.) The two smaller buildings have no prospective tenants identified. A German grocery store chain, Lidl, will own and occupy the largest building. There are a number of environmental issues with regards to this site which include underground storage tanks, septic systems, drinking water wells, and ongoing remediation (including monitoring wells) of ground water contamination from a gasoline service station historically located on lot 12; additionally, current storm water management plans appear to be incomplete. Finally, the site has extensive tree cover and forested wetlands (although the applicant has requested to defer a tree removal and compensation plan until some later time), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service has noted, in the past, that the area may provide potential habitat for the endangered swamp pink. Current plans for an additional large (up to 90,000 square feet) building, partially or wholly on Lot 13, are as yet undetermined.

The Environmental Commission agreed that our recommendations to the Zoning Board address the environmental concerns identified above, and that the applicant's requests for waivers of an Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Worksheet not be granted.

Committee Reports

Open Space

Leon reported that the Community Garden project is working out very well. A third of the garden has been set aside to grow tomatoes and squash which are distributed weekly to clients of Mothers Cupboard. In addition, seven Washington Township residents have garden plots and have planted tomatoes, pumpkins, watermelons, and flowers. If there is a demand for additional plots, the area of the garden can be doubled.

Council Report

No report.

Correspondence

No report.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/Dorothy Hunter

Dorothy Hunter, Secretary
Washington Township Environmental Commission