

Environmental Commission Meeting
Monday February 22nd 2024 @ 7:00 pm
Borough Hall

Minutes

Meeting start time: 7:03PM

Attendance: Chris Runion, Marcia Karrow, Freddy Mejia, John Kearny, Melissa Swingle, Justin Schelenger, Jae Hoff (phone)

Public Comment

Jesse Smith, Flemington Borough resident, discussed the possibility of an event called a “bioblitz.” A “bioblitz” is an event where a group of volunteers attempts to catalog as many species (animals, plants, fungi, etc.) in the area during a set period of time. Participants use an app called iNaturalist to take photos of organisms in order to identify and catalog them.

Smith asked if there would be any need to get a permit for this event. Smith stated the aim is to do this event on the 22st-23rd of June.

Update on Garden Project

Trent Levitt was not present to provide an update. The Commission will follow-up next month.

Sustainable New Jersey

The commission discussed a new \$25,000 grant from Sustainable New Jersey for new windows for Flemington Borough Hall. Specifications for all the windows at Borough Hall have already been gathered and one replacement quote has already been solicited with an estimate of ~\$36,000 total cost.

Review Golden Heart Group Homes LLC Application

Mayor Karrow is recused and did not participate in the discussion of the application by Golden Heart Group Homes.

Golden Heart is requesting a D-variance for a daytime vocational program for adults with disabilities. Their location is at 47 Maple Road. The Commission discussed concerns over the variance regarding whether a non active-use business should be allowed in this location.

Review Wertsville Road Properties Application

The Environmental Commission reviewed the resubmitted application and site plans for Wertzville Road Properties. The new site plans detail three sets of six townhomes (18 homes in total) on a culdesac. No traffic study or DEP permits have been submitted for the project yet. Several concerns about the proposed project were discussed.

First, it was noted that a section of wetlands would be filled in. Stormwater will be collected via a system of underground pipes, which will connect to Raritan Township sewer services, and there will be no stormwater retention on site. The proposed plans detail a high level of impervious cover, leaving very little area for rain and runoff to be absorbed.

Second, the current plans will result in the removal of nearly all of the trees on what is currently a wooded lot. Trees will be planted along the access road coming into the flag lot. The project owner has also indicated that the Home Owner's Association for the new development will forbid the planting of shade trees on the rest of the property. This will leave very few shade trees on the property.

Third, no environmental impact statement has been submitted despite the significant changes to the environment and ecology of the lot.

Fourth, the proposed lighting should be amended to reduce light pollution.

It was discussed that the Commission would like to ensure that these concerns were raised to the Planning Board before the next review of the plans.

Meeting End Time: 8:38PM