

Highland Park Environmental Commission
Meeting of December 4, 2024
Minutes

Present: Michael Rosenberg, Jonathan Abrahams, Laurel Kornfeld, Mark Lesko, Karen Swaine,
Council liaison Matt Hersh

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:13 PM.
2. The minutes of the November 6, 2024, meeting, were approved with minor corrections. Item 6b should read, the volunteers are waiting for DPW to do the rain garden work they agreed to do. Also, Karen will help supervise the volunteers, not do the maintenance.
3. Site Plans: None
4. Correspondence: None
5. Old Business
 - a) Meadows Update. Nothing new
 - b) Neonicotinoids. Laurel will research state legislation to regulate neonicotinoids and send the information she finds to Mark. Matt reached out to ANJEC and got some draft ordinances on this. The task force dealing with leaf blowers is not currently addressing neonicotinoids. Karen suggested this should be a Board of Health issue. Laurel will bring it up at a Board of Health meeting.
 - c) Greenway. Surveyors are working to delineate the property lines along the river. The borough sent a letter to property owners in the vicinity of the proposed greenway informing them of the surveyors' work.
 - d) Website. Mark noted our website gives the schedule for our 2023 meetings. We need to update this to our meeting schedule for 2025.
 - e) Leaf Blower Ordinance. Matt reported the task force wants to put together a list of potential meeting dates in December to discuss the issue with Matt and Teri. We questioned whether we can compost leaves and lawn material without needing the required \$15,000 DEP composting permit.
 - f) Community Solar. Nothing new
 - g) Cleanups. Mark reported the last cleanup was done at Valley Place Ravine, and 21.5 pounds of garbage were collected. A cleanup scheduled for this coming Saturday has been canceled due to predicted cold weather. Mark has a spreadsheet showing all cleanups going back to July 2022. Sustainable Highland Park just purchased additional cleanup supplies. The high school and middle school plan to do their own cleanups. This will help the borough win points from Sustainable Jersey.
 - h) Invasive Species Act. Nothing new
 - i) Mary Denver Memorial. At a meeting to plan the memorial, participants discussed installing a bench, doing plantings, signage, and funding for the memorial at the Native Plant Sanctuary. Karen selected a bench, which will have to be bolted to a pad. Mary's information will be engraved on the bench. Teri said a commemorative sign and an interpretive sign will cost a total of \$2300. Karen said we can get a good wood bench for around \$800. Susan Edmunds created a Go Fund Me toward this goal. The volunteers have asked the Native Plant Society for a \$3,000 grant to fund the memorial and are waiting to hear back. Rather than trees, one to three shrubs will be planted near the bench. These are easier to plant and replace if they die. Matt noted

the borough will start looking at pricing for benches. The goal is to do this project in the spring.

- j) New Mural at the Environmental Education Center. Matt found out no formal authorization was issued for painting the mural.
 - k) Climate Superfund Act. Mark sent Commission members an email from Food and Water Watch about this. The goal of the legislation is to get NJ polluters to pay for the pollution they caused and get fossil fuel companies to pay for new energy sources. We need to review this. Matt recommended we let him know if we want the borough to adopt a resolution supporting this legislation.
 - l) Budget. Matt recommended we ask ourselves what we want to do that will cost money next year. Mark noted we need more benches along the Meadows Trail. The cost of these might be beyond the Commission's \$2,000 budget. Mike will discuss budget issues with Allan regarding benches and whether we want money for any special programs, such as the rain gardens and composting. Matt reported that Interfaith Rise does woodworking, and he will contact Joy Weinberg of their woodworking shop to find out if they could build benches for us. We could also seek help from Scout groups.
6. New Business
- a) Matt informed us that the Borough Council reorganization meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 7, 2025.
 - b) Matt informed us he will continue to serve as the Commission's liaison next year.
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 PM. The next meeting of the Environmental Commission will take place on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 8 PM on Google Meets. The meeting is postponed from the first Wednesday of the month due to New Year's Day.