

**Township of West Milford
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

MINUTES

MARCH 5, 2012

The regular meeting of the Township of West Milford Environmental Commission was called to order at **7:34 p.m.** followed by the reading of the Legal Notice.

Prior to the Roll Call the Oath of Public Office was administered to Citizen Member and Chairman Stephen Sangle.

ROLL CALL: Present: Andrew Abdul, Gillian Hemstead, Douglas Ott, Thomas Tamayne, Don Weise, Chairman Stephen Sangle, Alternates Timothy Dalton and Lucas Slott.

Absent: Gary Oppenheimer.

APPLICATIONS

Chairman Stephen Sangle reviewed the application that was scheduled for the Board of Adjustment on March 27, 2012, prior to the Environmental Commission's meeting. The application was for Block 13001; Lot 2; 25 Hearthstone Drive regarding the construction of a detached two-car garage. The only concern noted was the drainage from the roof, which was not addressed on the plans, nor was the topography present on the plans submitted for an assessment of the drainage. There were no other apparent environmental concerns.

TELECOMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS - None.

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND STATUS REVIEW

2004 Greenwood Lake 319H Grant/2007 Stormwater Implementation 319H Grant: 604(b) – Chairman Sangle requested that Dr. Fred Lubnow be contacted for an update on the 319(h) grants. Gillian Hemstead reported that she had been in contact with Dr. Lubnow regarding his involvement with the Greenwood Lake Commission, and stressed that the 319(h) grant did not involve the GWL Commission. She provided an overview of the completed grant projects and noted that unexpended funds remained which may be used for additional projects based on approval from the NJDEP. Luke Slott inquired about the type of projects that are proposed, and the Commission was advised that the projects were discussed with Dr. Lubnow at a meeting that had been arranged with the Environmental Commission, the Township Engineering Department, and the Township Administrator. No one from the Commission attended the meeting on March 2, 2012. The Secretary was requested to contact Dr. Lubnow to provide a summary of that meeting and inquire when he will be returning to the Commission for an update on the new grant projects. Resolutions approved by the Township Council for additional project funding to utilize the remaining grants monies were reviewed. The Commission concurred that they should receive a report on a description of the projects being proposed.

604(b) OWTS Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plan Grant: Chairman Sangle and Ms. Hemstead provided an overview of the onsite wastewater treatment plan project and clarified for the new members the difference between the 319(h), which deals with stormwater filtration for the absorption of excess phosphorous, and the 604(b) grant which addresses a wastewater prioritization plan and the establishment of a baseline for septic standards. Ms. Hemstead advised that on April 25, 2012 an encore presentation of the OWTS prioritization plan will be held at the West Milford Town Hall for the Greenwood Lake Commission and the public; her husband would be taping the presentation.

Streetscape Grant: Doug Ott reported that the Township has employed a new Administrator and it will take a little time for her to get familiar with the project.

Recreational Trails Signage Grant: Doug Ott reported that the smaller signs that were included in the project are ready to be installed and were waiting for coordination with the Engineering/DPW for installation. He noted that the larger remaining kiosks are still under construction.

2010 ANJEC Smart Growth Planning Grant - Trails Master Plan: Doug Ott reported that he, Bob Jonas, and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce met to try to address the sidewalk controversy that has ensued lately in the Township. They are attempting to locate trails that would connect the Wallish site on Lincoln Avenue to the shopping centers on Union Valley and Marshall Hill Roads. He noted that there seems to be some options for trail connections.

With regard to the Trails Master Plan, Mr. Ott reported that he emailed George White of White Environmental Services the week prior to this meeting and has not had a response. Luke Slott commented that various groups were supposed to meet and compile information on various trail options. The Commission assumed that Mr. White was coordinating the project as the consultant for this grant. Don Weise inquired whether Mr. White has knowledge of public lands and the correct ownership information, and Chairman Sangle advised that the Commission could obtain ownership information from the Township. Chairman Sangle advised that he would contact Mr. White for a status on the trails master plan project.

ON GOING BUSINESS

Lakes Committee: Andy Abdul reported that the February Lakes Committee meeting was cancelled. He provided a copy of the January minutes to the Commission for review. Doug Ott commented that he had heard that a new Health Officer had been hired, but no one could confirm this.

Open Space Subcommittee: Gillian Hemstead commented on the open space matter and suggested an Environmental Commissioner should attend a Township Council meeting to advise them of the open space recommendations from the Commission, adding that they don't seem to be aware of the properties the EC have suggested. Chairman Sangle advised that the Commission spent years developing and promoting the "Greenbelt" that was adopted by the Township, but as the economy took a downturn, recreation needs were met by open space purchases. He echoed the sentiment of the Commission that environmental aspects should take precedence and he was assured by the Township that the "Greenbelt" properties would be considered during the next round of purchases. Ms. Hemstead responded that the Council has indicated publicly that they do not know the specific properties that the Commission encouraged the Township to consider for open space. Chairman Sangle reiterated that the Administration and Council are aware of the properties, but there were several factors that have hindered certain open space acquisitions. He noted that often it is a financial issue, which is the role that the land conservancy plays with regard to negotiating a purchase that is satisfactory to all involved. When considering the parcels included in the greenbelt, some of the properties that cannot be developed due to severe environmental constraints may not be purchased because they will remain undeveloped and will still provide tax revenue. He continued, stating that properties that should be considered are those that are farm assessed with minimal tax revenue that can be purchased for a reasonable amount. Chairman Sangle stressed the need for communication between the Commission, Administration and the Land Conservancy agency who are responsible for brokering the land purchases. The Commission requested that a memo be sent to the Township Administration with a list of the properties that were recommended in the past.

Environmental Contamination Issues: Tom Tamayne advised that there was no Health Officer, so he will wait until there is someone in that position before continuing with his monthly update. Resident Doris Aaronson commented that she will make inquiry on the status of the Township Health Officer.

Green Team – Sustainable Jersey: Doris Aaronson advised that she received an update from Renee Alessio regarding the anti-idling resolution and has requested that the Commission hold up on recommendation of the resolution. Chairman Sangle advised that, as a subcommittee of the Commission, any recommendations should come to the Commission for discussion prior to being sent to the Council. Gilliam Hemstead replied that the Commission had reviewed the resolution at a prior meeting, and that the State had statutes that requires compliance with anti-idling, and that nothing in the resolution requires the Township to do anything, but merely provides Township support for the anti-idling campaign. Tom Tamayne commented that the resolution provides an opportunity for grant monies through the Sustainable Jersey program. Chairman Sangle mentioned some exceptions that should be considered, including medical conditions that necessitated a car kept idling, especially in winter or summer. Ms. Aaronson noted that there were exceptions in the resolution for medical and emergency services (police). Chairman Sangle was concerned that the resolution was sent to the Township with a recommendation for adoption without proper review. It was noted that the memo accompanying the resolution did not recommend anything and that the Commission simply forwarded it on to the Council for a review. Mr. Tamayne replied that the resolution was primarily for the point system of the Sustainable Jersey program. The Commission concurred that this matter should be tabled until a revised resolution is prepared.

Tennessee Gas Pipeline: Luke Slott inquired if there were grants available with Sustainable Jersey for environmental projects. He noted that a draft environmental assessment was due soon on the Tennessee Gas

Pipeline project. As far as an update, much of the information is the same as had been reported prior to this. He noted that the high school may be producing a documentary on TGP with the H.S. Green Team.

NEW BUSINESS

Environmental Resource Inventory – Highlands Master Plan – The Commission discussed the recent Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) prepared by the Township Planner and provided to the Commission for review and approval. Gillian Hemstead made note of an item that had been crossed out on page 19 – “bobcat” – and commented that the news had just covered the story about the injured bobcat in West Milford. Tom Tamayne inquired about the 604(b) grant draft report and wondered if this information is included in the ERI. Due to the size and complexity of the document, the Commission concluded that they would individually review the ERI and submit their comments to the Commission’s Secretary to be forwarded to the Township Planner.

Amphibian Crossing on Clinton Road – The Commission had no update on the event.

Draft Anti Idling Resolution – This matter is on hold until revisions have been made to the draft resolution.

ANJEC Sustainable Land Use Planning Grants for 2012 – Chairman Sangle reviewed the list of possible grant projects provided by ANJEC. With the deadline looming on March 30, 2012, the Commission felt that applying for another grant and coordinating a project would not be advisable at this time. Don Weise stated that he has experience in grant writing and he would be willing to assist the Commission with future grant opportunities. Chairman Sangle noted the loss for the Commission and the Township with Rob Sparkes no longer on staff to administer the grants. The Commission concurred that they would consider future grant opportunities if there was cooperation and assistance from the various members and the Township.

Annual Report to Township Council – Chairman Sangle advised that he will present his Annual Report to the Township Council in May following the conclusion of several of the grant projects.

Greenwood Lake Commission – Comment on request from Ella Filippone about proposed purchase of 261 Lakeside Rd; Block 3201; Lot 5 for possible GWL Commission office and future trailhead. The Commission reviewed the property and did not see any apparent environmental concerns. A memo was to be sent to the GWL Commission advising that the Environmental Commission had no concerns about the purchase.

Morris Canal Greenway Feasibility Study – The Passaic County Planning Dept provided their report on the Morris Canal Greenway Feasibility study. This document was not available for the Commission’s review but was available in the Planning Dept for anyone who wished to review it.

Volunteer of the Year Program – Andy Abdul advised that he would be present at the Township’s Volunteer of the Year Awards representing the Association for Special Children and Families, and he agreed to speak on behalf of the Environmental Commission.

MINUTES

The minutes from the December 12, 2011 Regular meeting of the West Milford Environmental Commission were **unanimously approved** on a **motion** by Douglas Ott and a **second** by Gillian Hemstead.

The following documents were reviewed by the Commission and filed:

HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING ACT

1. Application copy received on February 22, 2012 for a Highlands Applicability and Water Quality Management Plan Consistency Determination received from Conklin Associates on behalf of the Awosting Association for the proposed construction of the “New Awosting Community Clubhouse” on Long Pond Road, Block 4105; Lot 1.

NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1. Authorization for Freshwater Wetlands G.P.25, Water Quality Certification, and Waiver of Transition Area for Access received from the NJDEP, dated February 13, 2012, for Block 17201; Lot 21, Ali Shamsji, 31 Cherry Ridge Road regarding the repair/replacement of a malfunctioning on-site ISSDS.

2. Application copy for a NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit and Freshwater Wetlands GP #1 for Structure # 1600255, LaRue Rd over Clinton Brook, Structure #1600460 Westbrook Road over West Brook regarding installation of scour protection at the sites.
3. Application received February 27, 2012 for a NJDEP Modified Freshwater Wetlands GP #2 for installation of New Natural Gas Distribution Mains in Public Rights of Way for the PSE&G Natural Gas Distribution System.
4. Receptor Evaluation Notice and original application received on February 27, 2012 from Petro Science regarding NJDEP Case # 05-02-14-1111-51, Gasgo, Inc., 1850 Route 23, Block 13603; Lot 3 regarding an initial submission for site remediation.
5. Receptor Evaluation and Public Notice Submittal received on February 27, 2012 from BETTS Environmental Services Corporation for Westbrook Friendly Service, 1205 Westbrook Road, Block 10901; Lot 8, regarding site remediation.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions, Environmental Commission training facilitated by ANJEC, March 24, 2012, 9 to 12:30, Denville Municipal Building, Denville, NJ. Fee to attend.
2. Passaic County Farmland Preservation Forum – March 19, 2012 at 6:30, Passaic County Planning Department, Totowa, NJ. RSVP required by March 10, 2012.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Doris Aaronson of Bearfort Road addressed the Commission regarding the upcoming presentation to the GWL Commission by Dr. Fred Lubnow with regard to the effect on lakes from phosphorous. She asked that the information be publicized and included in the newspapers to educate the public. With regard to the baffles that have been installed in various storm drains, she inquired if one could be installed at the base of Pinecliff Lake Dam because of her concern about the fish being affected from the phosphorous. She requested a copy of the Open Space Ordinance so that the issue of purchasing property with open space funds for recreational use can be addressed, which she noted, the ordinance prohibits.

With regard to the State Strategic Plan, she expressed concern that this may impact West Milford and the Highlands preservation area. She noted that State meetings to discuss the document are planned for areas in South and Central Jersey, but none in the North which could be most affected. She expressed concern about the purple blotches that have reappeared in this recent document. She advised that the document is written in “doublespeak” and that she was warned that it would undo the Highlands Act because it can override the Highlands legislation. She distributed comments from an environmental activist who warned of expansion of sewer service areas among other things. The deadline was April 1, 2012 for comments. Ms. Aaronson stressed that she wanted the document to be reviewed and comments to be made so that the groundwater for millions can be protected.

Maryellen Gabay, former Environmental Commission member, inquired about the process for Boy Scouts who are interested in doing environmental projects in the Township as part of a U.S. Congressional Award program. She was advised that they should compile their information and present it to the Township Council for endorsement, but they should also contact Renee Alessio of the Green Team/Sustainable West Milford and the Environmental Commission. Chairman Sangle publicly thanked Ms. Gabay for her years of service on the Environmental Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting **adjourned** at **9:40 p.m.** on a **motion** by Tim Dalton with a **second** by Luke Slott.

Approved: May 7, 2012

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonya E. Cubby, Secretary