

**Township of West Milford
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

MINUTES

JULY 1, 2013

The July 1, 2013 regular meeting of the Township of West Milford Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:31 p.m. with a reading of the Legal Notice. The meeting was held in the small conference room due to a conflict with the Township Library's special program.

ROLL CALL: Present: Andrew Abdul (L), Timothy Dalton, Gary Oppenheimer, Douglas Ott, Alternate Jennifer Easterbrook, Chairman Stephen Sangle.
Absent: Thomas Tamayne, Don Weise, Lucas Slott.
Also Present: John Lauretano, Parks & Recreation Advisory Comm.; Boy Scout Elliot Kossove

Chairman Stephen Sangle requested Jennifer Easterbrook to sit in for Don Weise. He advised that a quorum was present to conduct this meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

John Lauretano – Open Space Referendum - Mr. Lauretano, Assistance Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, was present to seek input from the Commission regarding the open space referendum on the November ballot that would allow open space funds to be used for preservation of land, maintenance of Township owned properties, and preservation of historic sites. He noted that this had been under review for 6 to 8 months and there was concern expressed about land being purchased for the creation of ballfields. Mr. Lauretano stressed that the main purpose of the referendum was to provide a portion of the funds for the improvement and preservation of facilities and sites that the Township owns, and to re-invest in what we have. The intent is not to just buy land and clear-cut, but to maintain and improve what the Township owns. With regard to the current open space funds, he noted that these would not be affected by the new referendum; only future funds would be utilized for fields, and sites like Wallisch and the Museum.

Chairman Sangle advised that the original purpose was for recreation, and preservation of historical and environmentally sensitive properties. He noted that the Open Space Committee is a subcommittee under the Environmental Commission. Meetings were held to review the properties being considered for open space acquisition, but he added, the last several years the Commission's voices went unheard, and purchases were made for other reasons than preservation of environmentally sensitive properties. He noted that when open space was being considered, the Commission predicted that purchasing properties for recreation would require regular maintenance. Chairman Sangle expressed that the intent for open space funds should not be for maintenance of ballfields.

Mr. Lauretano reported that some of the new appropriations for open space would be dedicated towards capital improvements, for example, new drainage system for the fields. Gary Oppenheimer commented that when forests are preserved, there is basically zero cost to the community, but when open space funds are used to purchase property for recreation fields and other uses, there is a cost to the ownership. He noted that the Township had approved a "Greenbelt" around the more developed center of the Township, but many of the properties were not purchased when they became available. Mr. Lauretano explained that the clay for the ballfields, and other maintenance is assumed by the organizations that use the fields including the West Milford Little League, West Milford Softball, and the Board of Education, and stressed that capital improvements to the fields and the bike track were not maintenance. Chairman Sangle inquired why environmentally sensitive properties were not included in the language of the referendum, and Mr. Lauretano responded that it was implied in the referendum under purchase of properties, which include historic, as well as environmentally sensitive properties. Mr. Lauretano also noted that the only recreation fields purchased recently with open space funds was the CYO field.

Chairman Sangle inquired whether the Parks and Recreation Committee was involved in drafting the referendum and Mr. Lauretano responded that it was discussed by the Committee and brought to the Township for consideration, but they did not draft the referendum, and merely inquired if it could be on the ballot as a referendum. Tim Dalton commented that the referendum should state with explicit language that environmentally sensitive properties would be purchased with open space monies, and it should be made clear that the Commission does not want properties to be passed up in the future. Chairman Sangle stressed that the Commission was not trying to remove or negate what the Parks and Recreation Committee want. He then

noted that the original intent was that the majority of open space funds were to be used for environmental properties. The Commission proposed that the referendum should stipulate that one third of the open space funds be dedicated to the purchase of environmentally sensitive properties and not just state “properties.” Mr. Lauretano stated that there was currently no land available that could be used for recreation, but if there is a chance in the future, they want the option of having funds available for purchase. Chairman Sangle noted that the Commission does not usually recommend properties that generate higher taxes, but they want the opportunity to have funds specifically earmarked for environmental purposes. Mr. Lauretano made it clear that the Parks and Recreation did not intend to purchase land for ballfields and clear-cut environmentally sensitive properties. The Commission continued the discussion on the matter and Mr. Oppenheimer observed that if one third of the funds collected went into each “pot,” then it would be equitable, but as the referendum was written, it could pull money away from one purpose for the benefit of another. Chairman Sangle emphasized that the Commission did not want to take anything away from historical or recreation, but merely wanted a fair distribution of what was originally intended to protect the environment. Several of the Commissioners inquired about the condition of the fields and Mr. Lauretano responded that many of the fields are in bad condition, and Douglas Ott inquired why the Parks and Recreation Committee hasn’t requested funds for a “top dressing” on the fields. Chairman Sangle reiterated that the Commission did not want to be an adversary, and Mr. Lauretano acknowledged that his Committee wants to work together for the benefit of all. Following discussion, it was determined that a statement would be prepared by several of the Commissioners to be read to the Township Council so that they understand the position of the Commission and so that a dialog can be initiated. The statement will be emailed to the Commission for feedback before presenting it to the Township Administrator. Mr. Lauretano thanked the Commission for their time.

Bob Jonas - 2006 Recreational Trails Grant (Repurposed) for Environmental Boardwalk – Bob Jonas advised the Commission that there were funds remaining from a 2006 Recreation Trails Grant that were supposed to be used for Westbrook Park to construct trails. Several issues arose since the grant was awarded, including the deteriorating condition of the bridge over the brook that was to be used for trail access, and this proved to be beyond the scope of the grant project. Efforts ensued for the re-purposing of the grant, including using the funds for the repair of the Environmental Boardwalk on Maple Road, as well as making it handicapped accessible. With the cooperation of the Township Engineering Department, the Administrator, and CFO, approval was granted by John Flynn of the NJDEP (Green Acres) to use the funds to hire a carpenter to complete the needed repairs. Mr. Jonas reported that there were approximately 100 boards that were to be replaced due to warping, using the remaining TREX boards the Township had from prior repairs. Chairman Sangle noted that handrails would be installed to cover as much as possible of the 1000 linear feet needed, and ADA parking was also proposed for installation across the street by the Maple Road School. Mr. Jonas noted that the Township was given 2 weeks to get proposals and 30 days to complete the project before the grant expired. The Commission discussed the most efficient use of material to complete the repairs necessary.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW – None.

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND STATUS REVIEW

2007 GWL NPS 319(h) Grant: Dr. Fred Lubnow emailed an update that was provided to the Commission; the Secretary was to email him to determine if he intends to be present at the August meeting for a full report.

Recreational Trails Signage Grant: Bob Jonas reported that the trails signs were completed as far as the Commission was concerned. There was a property on Warwick Turnpike that a trail cut through, but the owner was selling and would not allow access for the trail, so a new trail will have to be developed along Warwick Tpk.

2010 ANJEC Smart Growth Planning Grant-Trails Master Plan: Doug Ott reported that there was a Trails Master Plan meeting several weeks prior to this meeting. Tim Dalton reported that he was putting the information from Joanna Slagle of Banisch Associates into an Excel spreadsheet. Chairman Sangle inquired if the trail information could be overlaid onto a tax map. It was suggested that the EC review the information for further input.

2013 Green Communities Grant – Community Forestry Management Plan: Chairman Sangle advised that the Township received the grant award for \$3,000. for the development of a Community Forestry Management Plan for the Township. The Township was required to adopt a specific DEP resolution in order

for the grant funds to be awarded. He noted that this grant could qualify for points under the Sustainable Jersey program.

NJDEP NNL Reforestation Grant - \$620,197.00: Chairman Sangle reported that there was no update on this grant at this time. A special DEP resolution would also be required prior to award of the grant funds. The application documents had been submitted to the NJDEP Dept. of Parks and Forestry.

ON GOING BUSINESS

Lakes Committee: Andrew Abdul distributed the minutes from the Lakes Committee meeting and noted that the main discussion revolved around septic systems, and the reports that were not able to be generated from the data system that the Township had installed. This matter is being researched. Mr. Abdul also reported that Paul Nietzer was the new chair of the Lakes Committee.

Open Space Subcommittee: Open space issues were discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

Environmental Contamination Issues: Tom Tamayne advised via email that he was still unable to touch base with the Health Officer⁵ due to their conflicting schedules.

Green Team–Sustainable Jersey: Renee Alessio reported that there was a Walmart Grant available, but it was due by August 4, 2013 – she just received the information in June. She intended to apply for grant funds for Anti-Idling Signs, but it is something that the Township would have to approve, and that requires time to get on the agenda for discussion, as well as a resolution of approval at a subsequent meeting. Chairman Sangle noted that it takes about 6 to 8 weeks to go through the process. Gary Oppenheimer suggested that Ms. Alessio contact Sustainable Jersey to request earlier notice for grants that would be available. Ms. Alessio commented that there were a lot of missed opportunities for the grants. Ms. Alessio reviewed some of the other resolutions that she was preparing so that the Township could get credits from Sustainable Jersey, including the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign, Pet Ownership, and a Wildlife resolution. She would send them to the Commissioners and the Mayor for review.

Tennessee Gas Pipeline: No update at this time.

NEW OR CURRENT BUSINESS

Report on Street Grits from DPW 06-17-13 – The Commission reviewed the memo from the Township Administrator advising of an update from the DPW regarding removal of the street grits. As of the date of the memo, the DPW has removed grits from 273 roads, with a total of 61.09 miles. The locations to be completed were Awosting, Highview, Old Milford and Crescent Park.

Braemar at West Milford, LLC – Conservation Easement: Doug Ott reported that an email had been sent to the owner, but had not received a response to date.

Autumn Lights Festival – Members were reminded about Autumn Lights Festival, October 12, 2013, 10 am to 5 pm.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the March, April, and May 2013 regular meetings were unavailable for approval but copies were available in draft form, upon request.

The following correspondence was received and reviewed by the Commission prior to filing:

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Highlands Water Protection And Planning Act Correspondence

1. Highlands Act – Exemption #4, Water Quality Management Plan – Consistent, dated June 4, 2013, received for Twins Realty Group LLC, 937 & 943 Burnt Meadow Road, Block 3906; Lots 9 & 10 and Block 6002; Lot 39.01 regarding proposed demolition of two existing buildings and four trailers and the construction of two new buildings on an existing concrete manufacturing facility site, with new parking area and new septic to be installed.

2. Highlands Act – Not Exempt, Water Quality Management Plan – Inconsistent, received for Dautaj Restaurant – Momento’s, 374 Morsetown Road, Block 4701; Lot 38.02, regarding the 50-seat prior expansion to an existing 120 seat restaurant, which included a paver patio measuring 0.083 acres, construction of a

concrete dam, and removal of vegetation and placement of fill covering 0.218 acres for expansion of lawn area on a non-residential lot comprising approximately 8 acres. This project was determined to be a major Highlands development and did not meet the exemptions under the Highlands Rules. The applicant is advised to submit documentation for a Highlands Preservation Area Approval.

NJ Department of Environmental Protection Correspondence

1. Notice from Robert Mazzocchi, 4 Clubhouse Trail, Block 5021; Lot 1, received June 4, 2013, regarding an application to the NJDEP for an extension of a Letter of Interpretation.
2. Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation: Line Verification, dated May 31, 2013, received from the NJDEP regarding Surjit Singh, 555 Warwick Tpke, Block 703; Lot 3, advising that the wetlands and waters boundary lines as shown on map "Existing Conditions/LOI Exhibit Lot 3, Block 703..." dated December 5, 2012, revised May 14, 2013, prepared by Jeffrey Careaga, P.E., is accurate as shown.
3. Notification from Houser Engineering LLC, dated June 13, 2013, advising that an application was being made for a Treatment Works Approval (TWA) for 133 Point Breeze Drive, Block 2601; Lot 14 regarding the construction of an on site sewage disposal system alteration.
4. Letter to NJDEP from the West Milford Township Treasurer transmitting the quarterly report for February to May 2013 for the Stormwater Implementation and Lake Characterization and Restoration Plan for Greenwood Lake (RP07-052).

Miscellaneous Correspondence

1. Notice from the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District (HEPSCD), dated May 20, 2013, advising that the soil erosion and sediment control plan is certified for 3.5 years for the Verizon Wireless Telecom Compound Ringwood 4, to be located at 750 Westbrook Road, Block 4701; Lot 61.
2. Notice from the HEPSCD, dated May 23, 2013, advising that the soil erosion and sediment control plan is extended under the Permit Extension Act of 2012 for Fieldstone at High Crest, 5 Chimney Ridge Trail, Block 13002; Lot 13, until November 15, 2016.
3. Notice from the HEPSCD, dated May 30, 2013, advising that the soil erosion and sediment control plan is extended under the Permit Extension Act of 2012 for Firrito Dwelling at Roaring Brook, 830 Westbrook Rd., Block 11102; Lot 6.02, until August 21, 2016.
4. ANJEC Report – Summer 2013
5. Notification from the NY-NJ Trail Conference regarding the sixth edition of the Sterling Forest Trails map that is available for \$7.95.
6. Memo dated June 17, 2013 from the Township Administrator responding to a request by the Environmental Commission regarding the removal of the street grits from Township roads.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was **adjourned** at **9:30 p.m.** on a **motion** by Douglas Ott and a **second** by Tim Dalton.

Approved: October 7, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya E. Cubby, Secretary