

September 25, 2023, Environmental Commission Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brandt, E. Duerr, M. Duerr, McCarthy, Stippick
MEMBERS ABSENT: Kohute, Link
ALTERNATES ABSENT: Cavone
LIAISONS ABSENT: Keen, Marsh
GUESTS PRESENT: Roger Duerr, Barbara Halpern, and Bill Petravich.

The September 25, 2023, meeting of the Township of Franklin Environmental Commission was both a live meeting in the municipal building conference room and a virtual meeting on Zoom. It was called to order by Mr. Stippick at 7:41 pm.

- I. **Minutes:** Upon a motion by Ms. Brandt, seconded by Mr. Stippick, the minutes of the August 28, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved.
- II. **Guests:** Ms. Halpern advised that, at the last Township Committee meeting, she inquired about whether a grant application to Green Acres for Malaga Lake Park had been submitted and learned that it had not. There may have been some concern about the match requirement. However, there is about \$600,000 in Franklin's Open Space Fund, although \$200,000 is needed for the Piney Hollow grant match and other funds are needed for the farmland preservation projects that will close soon. Still, there will be monies left in that Fund. There should be sufficient funds to work on Malaga Lake Park needs, especially to replace the playground equipment.

Ms. Halpern also reported that the Township Committee intends to use township money (\$1,500), plus a grant they will apply for, in order to do some hazardous waste cleanup.

III. **Emergency Response and Management Report:** There was no Emergency Management report.

IV. **Applications:** There was a Planning Board and a Zoning Board application that were reviewed:

- A. **PB 23-11:** This application is by Vargo at 2771 Delsea Drive (block 2103/lot 43) for a 173 sq. ft. addition on an existing, nonconforming building. There will be no additional impervious cover, drainage, or lighting because it will be built over an existing sidewalk and parking lot. Variances are needed for the existing minimal lot area (1/5 ft. short), and existing frontage (30 ft short), and for the existing sideyard setback where parking occurs.
The Environmental Commission had no comment.
- B. **ZB 23-08:** This application is by Tresska Towing Co. for 3292 Delsea Drive (block 2201/lots 23 & 25) for a use variance for 21,000 sf. of storage of towed vehicles. The application is incomplete for Environmental Commission Review with no site plan but there was an Engineer's Report. The plan could be viewed by the EC at its next meeting.

This business is within a Highway Commercial zone. That zone was extended on Delsea Drive at the last Master Plan Reexamination review, although the Township Engineer and Zoning Official need to be advised of that. They also need to be given information as follows:

1. Existing improvements on this site were done without permits. The driveway and parking area were enlarged and a 6 ft. fence with barbed wired was added.

2. The application needs to identify the hours of operation, number of employees, the site lighting, the number of stored vehicles, and the condition of the stored vehicles. In addition, security, noise, light, and odor information is needed.

V. Old Business:

- A. **Piney Hollow:** Mr. Stippick reported that the bid packet was sent to Green Acres for approval. He has not yet seen it.
- B. **Malaga Lake Park:** Mr. Stippick reported that Mr. Finley, the township Administrator, is working on ways to finance new playground equipment. The question was asked whether Mr. Finley knows about the 2016 bond that was obtained and that had \$150,000 allocated for Malaga Park improvements. Half of that bond was used to resurface the roller hockey rink, in 2016-2017, which is currently being resurfaced again. The other half was to be for Malaga L. Park.
- C. **Community Day:** As everyone knew, Community Day was cancelled for 2023. Ms. McCarthy reported that she and Mr. E. Duerr will be returning equipment to the storage facility on Main Rd. this week. She also gave the graphics and the easel she purchased to Mr. Stippick for use next year.

VI. New Business:

- A. **Clean Communities:** Mr. Stippick reported that Franklin Township received a grant of \$55,000 for litter pickup, for education and sponsorship of cleanups on public land, for signage, and for law enforcement of litter ordinances. The grant is being administered by Deanna at Public Works. Mr. Finley advised Mr. Stippick that some of the cleanups are by teams, including one by a High School team (possibly a plant or flower club), and some money will go to Public Works personnel who do litter patrols. Mr. Stippick proposed linking the Environmental Commission cleanups to the other groups.
- B. **Tree Removal and Replacement of Street Trees:** All municipalities must now adopt an ordinance that requires a permit for removal and replacement elsewhere in the township of street trees. The ordinance must also regulate the type of trees that can be planted as replacements, to prevent the planting of invasive species. The ordinance can also add some trees of a certain size (such as over 24" dbh – diameter at breast height) on private property.

Mr. Stippick will draft a statement of support and assistance that the Environmental Commission can provide for this matter.

- C. **Potential New Projects:** Ms. McCarthy suggested that the EC members look at the last ANJEC Report. It described several projects that we may wish to emulate. Also, she advised that our Environmental Resource Inventory needs to be updated. There are funds available through Sustainable New Jersey that might help with that update. Perhaps this could be discussed at the next EC meeting.
- D. **Master Plan:** The question was asked about the timing on the Master Plan reexamination process. No one was sure and it was thought it may have been postponed to 2024.

VII. Mail: There was no mail.

VIII. Adjournment: Upon a motion by Mr. Brandt, seconded by Mr. E. Duerr, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne McCarthy, Vice-Chair and Acting Secretary.

The next meeting of the Environmental Commission is on Monday, October 23, 7:30 pm. It will be both a live meeting in the Municipal Bldg. conference room and a Zoom meeting.