

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION- TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN**

March 12, 2015

OAKHURST, NEW JERSEY

The Regular Meeting was held in the Turner House Conference Room, Township Library, 701 Deal Road, Ocean Twp, NJ 07712 beginning at 8:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Pogwist
Member(s) Von Gerichten, Colten, Amellio, Gaudette, Lutz, Brody
Alternate(s)
Associate(s) Stroebel, Johnson, Natanagara

Absent: Member(s)
Alternate(s) Theodora, Rogoff
Associate(s) Gulick, Grove

Others: Kate Maloney, Secretary
Andrew Brannen, Township Manager
Edward DiFiglia, Resident

Statement of Compliance with Open Public Meetings Law:

Ray Pogwist announced that the notice requirements of the Open Public Meeting Law for this meeting have been satisfied; a copy of the Annual Notice was sent to the Asbury Park Press and The Coaster, posted in Town Hall and filed in the office of the Township Clerk on May 2, 2014.

A motion to adopt the February 5, 2015 minutes was made by Stephen Gaudette and seconded by Stephen Renee Amellio.

In Favor: Pogwist, Von Gerichten, Colten, Amellio, Gaudette, Lutz, Brody
Opposed: None
Ineligible: Stroebel, Johnson, Natanagara, Rogoff, Gulick, Grove
Absent:

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Eagle Scout Project

Eagle Scout Ryan Ross of Troop 71 explained to members his proposal to reinstall signs as well as new informational signs for the Gristmill site on Monmouth Road. Ross gave the members a brief history of the site stating that it was originally

constructed in the late 1700s and was powered by the Whale Pond brook. He stated that the original signs that were posted were destroyed during Super Storm Sandy. Members inquired about what he plans to do with the landscape and Ross explained that there are to be no trees removed, but he hopes to plant shrubbery to make the location more appealing. Member Laurel Von Gerichten advised that he should plant 'easy maintenance' plants and member Renee Amellio suggested that he call the township for a "dig out" in order to ensure that there won't be any electrical lines when they install the new sign.

Green Fair

Chairman Pogwist explained to members that the Green Fair will be held May 2nd between 10 am and 2 pm. He explained that there will be free bike helmets for kids with a demonstration of adjustments to fit properly. Pogwist stated that the event is children oriented and member Renee Amellio said that the Energy Hog will make another appearance this year. Members then discussed the possibility of getting participation from the elementary, intermediate, and high school students. Member Laurel Von Gerichten will ask if the High School Garden Club will participate in the event. Resident Edward DiFiglia stated that the Commission should look into having more interactive exhibits such as a reptile keeper or bee keeper and Chairman Pogwist agreed to lead a discussion about local beekeeping.

ANJEC Training

Ray Pogwist reminded members that there will be ANJEC training sessions if any of the members were interested in attending. The first will be held on March 21st in Pennington and the second on March 28th in Roseland.

Township Tree Sale

Chairman Pogwist announced to members that the Shade Tree Commission will be having a tree sale on April 18th between 10 am and 12 noon at the Township Community Pool. He informed the members that the informational flyers as well as order forms will be posted to the township website for residents to choose and order a tree of their choosing.

Anti-Idling Education

Member Renee Amellio stated that this project is still in progress and is hoping that it can be presented to residents at the Green Fair in May. Amellio explained that she is looking for enforcement at the Township level; hoping to establish an ordinance and the possibility of putting up signs at local businesses and schools for "no idling." She also stated that she would like the Police to become involved with the possibility of giving a written warning and then a ticket with a small fine.

New Sustainable Jersey Initiatives – Ideas

Ray Pogwist announced that there will be a Monmouth County Sustainability meeting held on April 15th. He asked members to think of new ideas that the Township could become involved in to boost the credentials for the Sustainable Jersey certification. Associate David Stroebel suggested the township look into the decomposition of leaves for residents. The idea is for residents to mulch the leaves into the ground on their property which would be more environmentally friendly and could possibly save the town money by cutting the costs of leaf clean up. Von Gerichten stated that other towns have done this with programs such as “love ‘em and leaf ‘em.” Members also discussed the ideas of rain gardens and rain barrels for residents and the possibility of the Township working with a rain barrel distributor to purchase and sell to residents.

Energy Savings Committee

Members Renee Amellio and Stephen Gaudette explained they are to speak to the Mayor about becoming the representatives for the Energy Savings Committee. The goal of the Committee is to promote efficiency and energy saving for residents. They explained that an audit occurred a few years ago and they hope to revisit the recommendations that were given to the Township and see which ones could still be carried out.

Grass to Meadow Initiative

Chairman Pogwist explained that resident Maggie Boyce was pursuing a project to change the grass field next to the Township library into a meadow. He stated that a section of the field would be roped off to allow the grass to grow tall and possibly add milkweed and wild flowers as well. This project would help increase the bee and butterfly population.

ANJEC Open Space Grant – Whale Pond Brook Watershed Assoc.

Ray Pogwist explained to members that he was looking into a partnership between the Township and the Whale Pond Brook Watershed Association for the ANJEC Open Space Grant Application. He explained there proposed project would be to preserve the Whale Pond Brook trails and create new trail markers. However, member Amellio expressed concern and stated that she did not believe multiple applications could be submitted. Township Manager Brannen also stated that they still required Township approval. A resolution is on the agenda for next week’s Council meeting.

ITEMS FOR UPDATE:

Advisory Letter – to Planning Board & Board of Adjustment

Ray Pogwist explained to members that the advisory letter was sent out to both boards, but said that it has not yet been distributed to the members. Township Manager Andrew Brannen discussed the letter and stated that the request to provide reports 5 days before each meeting seems simple, but unfortunately is harder to accomplish. He explained that there have been instances where revisions to plans are submitted only a few days before the meetings and is therefore difficult to give enough time for the Commission to review. Township Manager Brannen went on to explain that the Township could ask for all plans to be submitted electronically to allow for a longer review period, but not all applicants have that capability. The municipality uses the 'home rule' to decide what is the best course of action to take for the process. Chairman Pogwist was concerned that the advisory letters were not distributed to the board members and requested that they be to Township Manager Andrew Brannen.

504 Runyan Ave

Township Manager Brannen updated members on the tree removal issue at this address. He explained that a letter was sent in January to the homeowner inquiring about the removal of trees. The homeowner promptly responded and stated that 5 trees were taken down with 2 of those 5 being damaged/dead. The homeowner enclosed pictures of the 2 trees showing the damage as well. He stated that there will be further inspections by the Township when the weather becomes warmer. Chairman Pogwist asked if a Certified Tree Expert (CTE) submitted a report on the condition of those two questionable trees as required by the township ordinance.

1008 Grove Ave

Chairman Pogwist stated that this property has been under review with the New Jersey Environmental Management Association for 500+ days. The review has been passed along from the Dept of Environmental Protection to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Planning Board Update – None

Concerns – None

Comments – None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Maloney
Secretary