

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting April 17, 2017

Vice Chairman Walitsky called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM, and read the Sunshine Law notice. The roll was called. Present were: M. Lauko, C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski, A. Schmidt, D. Triggs, A. Vernick, P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase. Absent: W. Andrews (prior commitment), J. Clyde (medical).

Chair's report: there was no mail. On May 1 there will be a meeting at Somerset Run, sponsored by the public affairs committees of the adult communities, on the cost to the township of charter schools.

Minutes: A. Schmidt explained the difference between what some counties do, under a grant-funded program, to check for idling violations at sites where it is thought to occur, vs. what Somerset County does, only during business hours and mainly in response to complaints. T. Chase stated that other requested corrections have been made in a revised version of the minutes sent out by e-mail, though the version presented at the meeting did not show these corrections. With these corrections the minutes of April 3 were approved. T. Chase reported that township manager Bob Vornlocker said that minutes should be sent to our staff liaison, Mark Healey, for posting on the township web site.

Website: A. Schmidt reported receiving two e-mails, one from a student asking the EC about environmental problems connected with mass transit, the other (apparently from a non-Franklin resident) asking the EC to push for outlawing leaf blowers. The township does have a model ordinance specifying during what hours leaf blowers may be used. An extensive discussion of leaf blowers ensued.

A. Schmidt also asked that future agendas have a heading for Old Business (the ongoing items currently listed under New Business) and a separate heading for New Business.

Plans review: three major site plans were reviewed – for the Resta property on the north side of Middlebush (32 single-family houses, 10.8 acres preserved as open space), RPM on Berry St. between Voorhees Ave. and School Ave. (150 apartments; taking out 127 trees, planting 264), Hampton Inn for a hotel on presently undeveloped land at the inner end of Atrium Drive, next to I-287 (the EC recommended using porous pavement in the parking lot).

Sustainable Jersey, Community Gardens – no news.

Old business: during the meeting, P. Walitsky received a text message from W. Andrews, saying that the second draft of the 2016 annual report and of the motion to intervene on the natural gas compressor application would be sent to Commission members later that night. The Commission reiterated support for filing as an intervenor. Goals for 2017 will be largely the same as for 2016. Franklin Day 2017: the EC should seek to be in the township tent as in 2016. Rain barrel workshop: the Watershed Ambassadors presented dates in July, August and September to hold a workshop – they are busy until then – and requested a place to store the 20 rain barrels being donated by L'Oréal. It should be possible to store them somewhere around the municipal building; M. Lauko could store 10 in her garage, but not 20.

New Business: A. Schmidt reported that Newtech, on Apgar Drive, no longer has a contract with Somerset County to take old electronics, they now charge to take them. They may be taken to the county's Public Works yard on Roycefield Ave. in Hillsborough for free disposal.

A. Schmidt also reported on how visible the digital billboard on the south side of I-287 is from the north side (44 Fordham Rd).

D. Pydeski suggested a joint meeting with the Clean Communities Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.