

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting June 1, 2020

The meeting (by Webex) was called to order at 7:03 PM, and the Sunshine Law notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, S. Jaracz, J. Johnson, C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski (audio only), R. Razani, R. Suydam, A. Schmidt, and P. Walitsky; and Council liaison T. Chase.

Chair's report: he has sent to Commission members some information about Highland Park's community solar project, with battery storage, on a former municipal landfill. He suggests a site visit. He noted ANJEC's training webinar for EC members, and suggested that members sign up for this (as several have).

Minutes: R. Suydam stated that she had notified W. Andrews in advance that she would not be able to attend the 3/2 meeting, should be listed as an excused absence. With that correction the minutes of March 2 were approved. The minutes of May 18, with amendments from Mike Pisauro as provided today, were also approved.

Web site/e-mail/social media: J. Johnson has not checked the e-mail this week. The web site still shows the 2018 Goals and Objectives. W. Andrews is still working on the 2019 Annual Report. J. Johnson would like to include among 2020 Goals & Objectives the Commission's interest in a community solar cell field.

Site plans: two. One, reviewed by P. Walitsky, is a request from the strip mall at Hamilton & Veronica to be open 24 hours/day. Lights and noise may be an issue to residences across Hamilton; otherwise no environmental issues. Another, reviewed by S. Jaracz, concerned subdivision of an undeveloped lot between Atrium Drive and I-287. At present this is only a subdivision, therefore no immediate environmental concerns.

New business:

Revision of our storm water ordinance: T. Chase suggests that Carl Hauck work on this (as he has suggested he will), but the Commission would review his draft and make suggestions. He will contact Carl and Bob Vornlocker as to how to proceed, asking for the current township ordinance.

Current efficiency and performance of Webex meetings: R. Suydam suggests that Bob McQueen provide training for public participants, and that after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted the EC have one in-person and one virtual meeting each month. If we don't do that, it would still be desirable for someone who is out of town to be able to join the meeting on line. W. Andrews will speak to Bob McQueen about this. Use of Zoom is not an option.

Film: The Story of Plastic. R. Suydam watched it on the Discovery channel, recommends it. It is about 90 minutes long. How can it be made available to the community? This can be done, setting up a specific time to view it on line, as ANJEC did. Perhaps this can be arranged over the summer, even a viewing on a screen at the township library. R. Suydam described how the producers of the film, produced with aid of a grant, may use registration to view it to demonstrate to the grant provider the impact of the film. J. Johnson moved that R. Razani find out the details of setting up a community on-line viewing; approved.

Old Business:

Boy Scouts – nothing new.

List of Environmental Stewardship awardees, for post on the EC web page: D. Pydeski sent it out, with the suggestion that J. Walker be added, he was named for his work on groundwater contamination in Franklin Park. This should be looked at once more, approved at the next meeting.

Underground utilities in new developments: T. Chase reported that Mark Healey says this is usual

practice now. It was suggested (A. Schmidt?) that it would still be good to have an ordinance requiring this. It was moved and approved for T. Chase to speak to Mark Healey about this.

Stream clean-up: S. Jaracz suggested we have a stream clean-up in the fall, replacing the spring clean-up which had to be canceled. R. Suydam suggested Three Mile Run, which crosses Rte. 27 at Phillips Concrete, just beyond the railroad branch, as a possible site; she will investigate the need for a clean-up there.

The e-mail from Kathy Snyder, mentioned in the 3/2 minutes, concerned an article on disposal of prescription drugs, including how to do this in household garbage. We do *not* support this; Franklin Township has a receptacle for these in the Public Safety building.

Coyote seminar: A. Schmidt contacted Michele Smith, DEP, who was to speak at this. She replied that they are not doing educational programs now; she will contact him when they are ready to resume these.

Franklin Times article: when is the next deadline? Suggested topics for an article from the EC: the Story of Plastics movie, the Highland Park community solar project (where in Franklin could such a project be located? D. Pydeski reported that Montgomery has solar cells over parking lots. R. Razani volunteered to explore this possibility.) The Highland Park solar energy project with storage was built by PSE&G on a municipally owned landfill lot on Donaldson St. The Stormwater ordinance revision could also be subject for an article.

Stormwater basin retrofit project, funded by Sustainable Jersey: is there a role for the EC? R. Suydam will call Tara Kenyon about this.

The Commission then moved to its suggested plastic bag ban ordinance. A. Schmidt had a number of suggested changes, beginning with numbering of the various sections; he will work with J. Johnson on this. He had a suggestion about the last phrase, beginning “and that such bans and limitations ...” of the next to last Whereas paragraph [but my notes don’t say what the suggestion was]. The last Whereas, concerning paper bags, needs to be rewritten, it is incoherent. On the second page, definition of Grocery store, the phrase “for offsite consumption” should be after “sells”. “Reusable bag” should be a separate paragraph, somehow it got attached to the preceding paragraph.

There was much discussion of the definition of “Single use paper carryout bag”. P. Walitsky observed that such paper bags are often reused for some other use. It was suggested to use the definition for single use plastic carryout bag”, substituting “paper” for “plastic”.

A. Schmidt stressed that section 6, “Each establishment shall be strongly encouraged to educate its staff ...”, does not belong in an enforceable ordinance. It was agreed to remove this paragraph.

In 7c, (1), (2) and (3), the sentence should read “has been given”, not “is given”.

Section 9 should be eliminated, since a firm starting date is now stated.

S. Jaracz presented a draft resolution of the Commission, stating the Commission’s general objectives, including banning all single use plastic products, including plastic plates, cups, cutlery and utensils. These are mentioned in the proposed ordinance as not to be provided *gratis* with take-out food. It was agreed to consider the text of the ordinance, as edited by A. Schmidt and J. Johnson, once more at the next meeting.

It was moved and approved to open the meeting to the public. There was no public attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.