

Minutes of the Franklin Township Environmental Commission meeting, April 3, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM, and the Sunshine Law Notice read. The roll was called. Present were: W. Andrews, T. Chase, S. Jaracz, J. Johnson, E. Pires, M. Santiago, A. Schmidt, R. Suydam, and P. Walitsky, and Sustainability Coordinator T. Kenyon and Rutgers intern R. Dave. Council liaison E. Potosnak arrived at 8:15 PM.

Chair's report: he attended an ANJEC training session at Fort Monmouth on April 1. He filled out a self-assessment form – and we rank as superstars! The B9 Schoolhouse warehouse application will next be heard in May. There are a few new staff comments.

The minutes of the March 20 meeting were approved, with corrections by A. Schmidt and one from the public.

The meeting was opened to the public. No one spoke. The meeting was closed to the public.

Correspondence: J. Johnson now has to get secondary approval for access to the EC email from IT, was not ready at this moment to report.

Site Plans: T. Chase reported on the third set of plans for the Baldwas Realty warehouse application, as worked over by the township, county and especially the D&R Canal Commission. They require conservation easements on significant areas of the site.

P. Walitsky reported on an application to the Board of Zoning Adjustment to build a house on a 5000 sq. ft. lot (where 9000 sq. ft. would be required, R-7 zone corner lot) at the corner of Battle Place and Davis Ave (just east of Franklin Blvd, south of Hamilton St.) They are at 31.02% impervious cover, where 30% is the maximum allowed. Grass pavers or porous pavers on the driveway would put them under 30%.

Just received were plans proposing two 75,000 sq. ft. warehouses on the front half of the big lot between Bennetts Lane and Veronica Ave. The application uses the street address 10 Bennetts Lane, although the lot does not touch Bennetts Lane. There is minimal frontage on Rte 27, but they propose access via the rear half of the original lot, where warehouses have already been built with access from Veronica Ave. We need to see a plan showing removal or preservation of trees on the lot, and how the access road will cross the brook which is tributary to Six Mile Run.

J. Johnson now reported on emails received. Gwendolyn Watkins asked why the Franklin police rang her doorbell at 11:53 PM. Beth Youmans, 233 Berger St., wrote opposing the Wilf Residence application, which proposes removal of seven acres of trees next to Berger St. homes to erect solar cells.

New business: J. Johnson reported on the present condition of the EC web page. Our Green Roofs resolution is missing.

R. Suydam asked what the EC will have at the Franklin High School Green Fair on April 29? We could order materials from Adopt-a-Drain, and get a reusable, retractable banner; can we get these items by April 29? R. Dave is interested in staffing our table.

The Education Committee is working on a joint presentation, with the Montgomery EC, of the movie American River, about the Passaic. R. Suydam recommended the book, by Mary Bruno, which gives the history of human contact with the river and its pollution with 3,3',4,4'-tetrachloro-dibenzodioxin, the pollutant formed from the herbicide 2,4,5-T used in Viet Nam.

R. Suydam reported on the meeting she and T. Chase had with Scott Thomas, Carl Hauck and Sean ----- of the Dept. of Public Works, concerning EC assistance with the public outreach

portion of the new MS-4 stormwater management permit. Scott Thomas has done this for prior versions of the permit, but welcomes EC assistance. Carl Hauck encouraged the EC and Shade Tree Commission to work on planting trees at the Memorial Forest; but first an updated, more detailed plan is necessary. R. Suydam noted that planting in November reduces subsequent maintenance.

T. Kenyon reported that it is possible to have a working meeting before a regularly scheduled EC meeting, but it would have to be advertised and open to the public. This would be scheduled when concentrated work on a particular topic is needed.

S. Jaracz reported on plans for the stream cleanup on April 15, Mile Run at Hamilton St., 9:30 to 12, same place as last year. Parking is available at SS Peter and Paul Church (but not by the trucks parked there). On April 19 Franklin High School Environmental Club members and people from Nestlé will clean up the woods at Naaman Williams Park 3-6 PM; M. Santiago will be in charge, as Jaracz has an electric car show to run.

The meeting was then opened to the public. Sue Lyons, of Cedar Brook Drive (near the Wilf Residence), asked where the Memorial Forest is to be, and when is the Franklin High School Green Fair. EC members answered her questions. She reported that St. Matthias Church people will be cleaning up Seeleys Brook behind the church on April 22.

The public session was then closed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.