

Franklin Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM, and the Sunshine Law notice was read. The roll was called. Present were: T. Biercz, C. MacIvor, D. Pydeski, A. Schmidt, D. Triggs, A. Vernick and P. Walitsky; and council liaison T. Chase. Absent: J. Clyde, W. Andrews.

Steve Berkowitz, of All American Plastics, Piscataway, spoke on recycling of soft plastics –e.g. plastic grocery bags, newspaper wrappers, bubble wrap, wrapping for packs of bottled water, etc. His company uses these as a raw material (and pays 15¢/lb for this). Somerset County does *not* accept these for recycling (difficulties in collection). Supermarkets typically accept them for recycling, though they will only admit to taking their own grocery bags; they want to avoid getting bags with food residues. They sell the collected material to Waste Management Inc., who sells it to companies such as All American Plastic.

Mr. Berkowitz picks up this material from the temple in Hillsborough which Paul Walitsky attends, also from a collection point in Millburn and from someone in Montgomery who brings it to him (he lives in Hillsborough). He personally delivers it to his company. The opportunity is for Franklin to have collection boxes – suggestions were for the municipal building, Public Works, the library branch in the Franklin Centre shopping center – from which he can collect the plastic, and pay the township (obviously not a major revenue source! More if we delivered it to Piscataway, but that would require large amounts to defray our cost of delivery.) Failing that, groups such as Boy Scout troops might be interested. A municipal program could earn points from Sustainable Jersey.

Chair's report: two hazardous substance release reports were received. Janie Dong will no longer be doing secretarial work for us, she has been transferred to Human Resources. A. Vernick will write to township manager Bob Vornlocker requesting support for Xeroxing, etc.

A. Vernick and P. Walitsky met with the executive director of the Sewerage Authority, Soulmaz Khojasteh, concerning the authority's plans to convert its back-up generators (at each pumping station) from diesel fuel to natural gas (which would generate less CO₂ and air pollution). The state has some reservations about this move, fearing fire, but it appears it will go through. When the change is complete and well documented it can earn us Sustainable Jersey points (an Innovative Action). The authority will supply us the necessary documentation.

The minutes of June 3 were approved as submitted. There were no changes at the web site.

Three plans were reviewed – two from Whiterock Partners for three-lot subdivisions north of I-287 and west of Elizabeth Avenue. They have municipal sewer available, but not piped water (which in this area would come directly from New Jersey American Water), and therefore are proposed as >20,000 sq. ft. lots, pursuant to the requirement that in the R-10 zone lots less than 20,000 sq. ft. must have *both* sewer and water.

Future seminars and workshops: the second rain barrel seminar, presented by New Jersey Water Supply Authority, will be on Thursday, July 25, 6 to 8 PM. At the EC meeting of Oct. 21 Anthony MacBride, Division of Fish and Wildlife, DEP, will present a seminar on Wild Turkeys in New Jersey. The state apiarist is available for a seminar on bees between November and March; we might have him at our first meeting in March.

T. Chase reported on visits to the two community gardens on June 9.

A. Vernick noted that the next EC meeting is July 15 – no first meeting because of the holiday.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM. =