

Franklin Township Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2013

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. Biercz, J. Clyde, D. Pydeski, A. Schmidt, A. Vernick, P. Walitsky. Council liaison T. Chase arrived at 7:08. Absent: D. Triggs, C. MacIvor.

Chair's report: the second rain barrel workshop, on July 25, went off well. Thirteen of the 14 barrels provided were used; the workshop was finished by 7:45. Assemblyman Chivukula appeared briefly.

A. Vernick will be describing the work of Environmental Commissions to the New Jersey Water Environmental Association in September.

The minutes of the meeting of July 15 were approved without change.

A description of the Wild Turkey seminar, to be presented in November, has been prepared by Cathy Blumig, and will be posted on the web site.

Two site plans were reviewed – expansion of a parking lot on Clyde Rd, and a sign placement for St. Matthias Church.

T. Chase reported that a grant application has been sent to Sustainable Jersey, for \$2000 - \$750 for bins for soft plastic, \$1250 to subsidize the newsletter report on this and other EC activities.

A. Schmidt, as a result of the question being brought up at the Shade Tree Commission, raised the question whether the Environmental Commission has formal by-laws, and if not should we have them. It was agreed that no need is seen for such.

Community gardens: J. Walker reported on the Home News article on the Naaman Williams Park garden which appeared July 22. He promises to put up the tool shed and new plot frames by fall. There is a tree stump which the Dept. of Public Works should be asked to remove after the growing season is over.

J. Walker also reported on natural gas exploration and drilling in Pennsylvania and upstate New York, where he has property. A 30 inch pipeline is slated to cross his New York property. Applications for well permits continue to be filed in New York State, despite the formal moratorium on actual drilling.

There have been major, unpublicized advances in technology in the past year. Each well site now has a 3 to 5 acre plot for disposal of waste water. Eighty to ninety per cent of fracking fluid returning to the surface is now reused. On his ten acre property in Pennsylvania are two wells, from which horizontal leads extend 1000' (industry standard

is now 2000', necessitating better recycling of fracking fluid). He deals with two companies, Chesapeake Energy and Statoil (a Norwegian company). Chesapeake Energy has drilled 7000 wells in four counties in northeastern Pennsylvania, *none* have failed to produce gas. Wells are now expected to produce for 50 years.

Marcellus Shale underlies most of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, as well as parts of New York, Maryland and Virginia. There is also oil and gas drilling in the Utica formation in eastern Ohio.

Environmental and safety monitoring in Pennsylvania is mostly carried out by the state Dept. of Environmental Protection; they are well funded and do a thorough job. The economic transformation in Pennsylvania has been very positive; a similar result is hoped for in the otherwise depressed area in upstate New York where drilling is projected to happen.

The wells feed directly into below-surface collection pipes, which feed into major pipelines. Compressor stations are being built to deal with the large flow of gas.

T. Chase reported on the township's appeal of the decision in Superior Court favoring the proposed digital billboard facing I-287. Decisions in federal courts supporting Mt. Laurel's ban of billboards there are expected to provide a favorable precedent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.