

**TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
October 17, 2016**

The Tewksbury Township Environmental Commission met at a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Meeting Hall, 60 Water Street, Mountainville, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., roll call taken and a quorum established.

Present: Chris Teasdale, Chairman, Mary Ace arrived at 7:43 p.m., Bruce Mackie, Geoffrey Connor, Glenn Likus arrived at 7:32 p.m., Matt Grobert, Mario Colitti and Rodney McCatharn, Alt. #1.

Absent: None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Chris Teasdale announced that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided by posting a copy thereof on the Municipal Building bulletin board, mailing a copy to the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon County Democrat, and filing with the municipal clerk, all on January 13, 2016.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those present stood and pledged allegiance to the American flag.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Teasdale opened the meeting up to the public. There being no one in the audience with questions, Mr. Teasdale closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

MINUTES

➤ September 12, 2016

The minutes of September 12, 2016 were approved by motion of Mr. Colitti and seconded by Mr. Grobert. All were in favor. Mr. Mackie abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Connor made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the following items of correspondence. Mr. Likus seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- a) A copy of a letter from Shana Goodchild, Land Use Administrator to Roberta Brassard, Township Clerk regarding proposed Ordinance No. 11-2016 along with a copy of the ordinance and Section 516 checklist.
- b) Public Notice of application for a Statewide General Permit 1 Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit and Waterfront Development Individual Permit for Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC's.

Mr. Teasdale noted that the ordinance that was provided in item a) above came to his attention via a notice in the Hunterdon County Democrat. Mr. Mackie noted that the Land Use Board found it not consistent with the Master Plan. He went on to explain that

typically these types of ordinances go from the Land Use Board to the Township Committee however this was the other way around. The Land Use Board discussed the ordinance in detail and one of the issues that came up is many properties have long driveways which becomes a considerable amount of impervious coverage. The biggest concern for the Land Use Board was the proposed changes in the percentages.

Mr. Teasdale noted that he attended the public hearing and questioned Mayor Melick about what drove the drafting of the ordinance and if he realized what would happen to a twelve (12) acre lot in the Highlands; under the proposed ordinance it would give that size lot another 10,000 sq. ft. of impervious coverage. Mr. Melick's response was that the problem is with the small constrained lots that don't have the ability to grow for trivial things like patios and are required to go to an enormous expense to apply for variance. Mr. Teasdale explained that there are other options for those types of issues such as changing the submission checklist or some type of leniency instead of opening up the entire township for new coverage. Mr. Teasdale noted that years ago he applied for a variance for his barn and except for the need for architectural plans he used records and maps from the township offices to put his application together. He explained that only three (3) members of the Township Committee were present at the public hearing and so they did not have a super majority to vote so the ordinance was tabled to November 7, 2016. The Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance, the Land Use Board Checklist and a breakdown of coverage that would be allowed under the new ordinance that Mr. Teasdale prepared.

Mr. Likus opined that if you exclude gravel driveways from the coverage calculation the problem goes away.

Mr. Connor opined that there should be a way to allow people to make modest improvements without going to the Land Use Board. A discussion ensued regarding the definition of "modest" and that the language would have to be very specific.

Mr. Grobert opined that excluding gravel driveways would help but those with paved driveways would have to apply for a variance. He opined that it will reduce many of the variance applications.

Using his property as an example, Mr. McCatharn explained that if he rebuilds his deck he's required by Code to put a concrete pad at the foot of his steps but because of his lot coverage he cannot do that without needing a variance. When asked the size of his property, Mr. McCatharn noted approximately 5 acres but he has 13,000 sq. ft. of driveway. Mr. Teasdale opined that an improvement like that is trivial but the question was what is trivial.

Ms. Ace opined there is a happy medium.

Mr. Likus explained that in his industry the variance process is burdensome, not only in Tewksbury but in all townships. He noted having all of the engineering documents prepared gets very expensive.

The consensus was that the proposed ordinance is a broad stroke in an effort to fix a small problem. The Commission authorized Mr. Teasdale to write a letter to the Township Committee supporting the Land Use Board's concerns and noting that there are other ways to handle the problem (exemption of gravel driveway (or a portion) and that special consideration could be given to small lots (for example no larger than 3 acres) that propose minor changes. Mr. Mackie suggested asking the Township Committee to send the draft ordinance back to the Land Use Board to investigate solutions.

SPECIAL GUEST:

- John Angeleri ISA Cert. Arborist and Master Tree Steward

Mary Ace introduced Mr. John Angeleri, Certified Arborist in NJ whom she invited to speak to the Commission about how trees function and current tree disease concerns in the area.

John Angeleri of Winter Hill Tree Service LLC was present and spoke to the Commission about some of the bigger concerns for municipalities, namely what is happening to Ash trees. He noted that some of the big tree companies are trying to sell chemicals that will prevent trees from dying and they are pointing at the Emerald Ash Borer which isn't in the area and is not impacting the Ash trees in Tewksbury. Mr. Angeleri explained that there are two (2) different diseases, Ash Yellows and the Emerald Ash Borer.

When asked by Mr. Teasdale about what is killing off the oaks, Mr. Angeleri said it was BLS (Bacterial Leaf Scorch) and it is especially impacting Pin Oaks. A discussion ensued regarding mulching around trees, watering, improving soil structure and proper trimming.

Mr. Angeleri also discussed the Thousand Cankers Disease of the Black Walnut tree, which is a small beetle that drills into the Walnut tree. The tree doesn't die from the holes that the beetle drills but from the fungus that is on the beetle's body. There is nothing to do to save the tree and if the tree dies on your property you have to burn it or bury it on site; you can't sell the wood because it is under quarantine.

The Commission thanked by Mr. Angeleri for his time and expertise.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Updates – Land Use Board

Mr. Mackie noted that the Board heard an informal presentation by a property owner that wants to use an outbuilding for his business of grinding and packaging teas and spices; they will be returning for a use variance in the future.

- Community Well Test Program

Mr. Teasdale noted that the return dates for the test kits is Wednesday and Thursday and

Wednesday is the busier date with 51 kits due back.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Grobert made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. Mr. Likus seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana L. Goodchild
Land Use Administrator