

**TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
November 13, 2017**

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 7:38 p.m., roll call taken and a quorum established.

Present: Chairman Chris Teasdale, Mario Colitti, Mary Ace, Bruce Mackie, Matt Grobert, Geoffrey Connor and Hope Kaufman arrived at 7:39 p.m.

Absent: Glenn Likus and Michael Schlaefel, Alt #2

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 10, 2017.

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 public, Mr. Teasdale closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

MINUTES

➤ October 16, 2017

Mr. Connor made a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2017. Mr. Colitti seconded the motion. All were in favor. Mr. Grobert abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Mackie made a motion acknowledging receipt of the following items of correspondence. Ms. Ace seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- a) A letter dated October 19, 2017 from Raritan Headwaters re: 28th Watershed-wide Annual Stream Cleanup.

Mr. Grobert made a motion to request \$300 from the Township Committee to be contributed to the Raritan Headwaters Association for the Annual Stream Cleanup. Ms. Ace seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Those in Favor: Mrs. Hoffman, Ms. Ace, Mr. Colitti, Mr. Mackie, Mr. Grobert and Mr. Teasdale

Opposed: None

Abstained: Mr. Connor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

➤ Updates – Land Use Board

Mr. Mackie noted that the Land Use Board and Township Committee had a joint meeting in executive session to discuss the affordable housing litigation.

➤ Pascale Pond – Water Chestnuts

Mr. Teasdale noted that there is money in the Township budget to treat the ponds in 2018.

➤ 2017 RHA Community Well Water Testing Update

Mr. Mackie thanked Mr. Connor and Mr. Grobert for their help with the program and reported that there were 150 well test kits sold. He noted that it was the highest year by far since he's been involved. Mr. Teasdale opined that the card sent out by Raritan Headwaters was helpful getting the word out to residents. Mr. Mackie also thanked Ms. Goodchild and Ms. Brassard for their help. When asked by Mrs. Hoffman if the Commission recommends how often wells should be tested, Mr. Mackie opined that it depends on individual circumstances. Mr. Grobert opined that it depends on what type of reading you get, whether corrective measures were taken the desire to retest to determine if they were successful.

Mr. Mackie noted that 21 wells tested positive for coliform and two (2) wells tested positive for Fecal Confirmation (E. coli), those people were notified immediately and most have sampled again. He explained that this can sometimes come from contamination at the time of sampling. He noted there were no arsenic failures, three (3) lead positives, four (4) wells exceeded iron allowance, one (1) well exceeded manganese allowance, two (2) wells tested positive for nitrogen and two (2) chloroform detections.

Mr. Mackie noted that on December 2, 2017 there is the State of the Watershed Conference and they will be reporting the results of the fall 2016 and Spring 2017 well testing and also a summary of the stream monitoring program.

➤ 2018 Budget

Mr. Teasdale noted that the budget encompasses small items such as education classes, dues, etc. Or, any project that the Commission has in mind. Mr. Teasdale suggested the herbicide for the treatment of the Pascale ponds.

- Wilma Frey, NJ Conservation Foundation and George Cassa, Highlands Coalition Trustee to discuss Highlands Issues/Challenges and Rules

After brief introductions, Mrs. Frey noted that her main focus is the Highlands Regional Master Plan and the issues related to that plan. She gave a brief history of the plan, which started in the mid 80's in Morris County. The Highlands Coalition started officially in 1988. In 2004, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act was approved. The Highlands Region provides the water for over 2/3 of the State's population, over 6 million people and over 200 cities and towns. Portions of 7 Counties and 88 Municipalities are part of the designated Highlands Region, approximately 860,000 acres and about half is in the Preservation Area and half in the Planning Area. There are only five (5) municipalities entirely within the Preservation area, Tewksbury is partially in the Preservation Area and partially in the Planning Area. Mrs. Frey noted that there was a task force in 1993 and when Governor Florio lost the election the task force dissolved. That task force had a representative from each County and at that time they decided to identify the most important part of the Highlands which then became the Preservation Area. The Preservation Area is approximately 2/3 forested and approximately 1/2 of the Planning Area is forested. The criteria for the Preservation Area was that it be forested, less developed and the Preservation Area excluded areas that had been declared Centers by the State Planning Commission.

Mrs. Frey noted that one of the current issues is that the Highlands Regional Master Plan needs to have a periodic update every six (6) years. The Act passed in 2004 and the Regional Master Plan was adopted 4 years later. She noted that the last few years the Highlands have hired some consultants to do monitoring reports to monitor the effects that the plan is having. This has been going on for approximately 2 years and the report was issued with a list of recommendations which propose changes to the Regional Master Plan. In Mrs. Frey's opinion, some of the proposed changes are good and some are not so good. The Highlands Coalition prepared a 40 page set of comments on the report, she noted that Mr. Cassa prepared comments on land use and affordable housing and she prepared comments on scenic resources, future land use and sustainable development. She mentioned that the thrust seems to be to increase the amount of attention devoted to economic development and one of the proposals is to identify Centers all over the region. Mrs. Frey noted that one (1) document that they would have to pass to make the changes to the Regional Master Plan is a set of procedures to amend the document. She discussed some of the proposed changes. When asked by Mr. Teasdale to explain the difference between the Highlands Council and the Highlands Coalition, Mr. Cassa explained that the Highlands Coalition is a coalition of environmental organizations and individuals that have banded together to advocate on behalf of the objectives of the Highlands Act. Mrs. Frey went on to explain that the Highlands Council is a government agency and its members are appointed by the Governor. When asked by Mr. Mackie if she knows the basis for the proposed changes in the septic density, Mrs. Frey explained that the Farm Bureau has lobbied for looser restrictions. A discussion ensued regarding nitrate dilution levels and models. When asked what the minimum lot size changed to, Mr. Cassa responded 23, 12 and 11 acres. Mrs. Frey explained that instead of using forested land vs. un-forested land they have taken the original Master Plan zones to determine lot size;

11 acres in the Community Zone, 12 acres in the Conservation Zone and 23 acres in the Protection Zone. This approach would yield 80 more lots that could be created in Tewksbury.

When asked about the impact the affordable housing obligation has on the Highlands, Mr. Cassa explained that Tewksbury has held its nose to the affordable housing grindstone. The Fair Share Housing Center now sits with every town to come up with a negotiated settlement based on a number that has been suggested by the Fair Share Housing Center. There have been competing methodologies since 2015. Tewksbury has a housing obligation range of 100 to 350/400 units. He noted that a few interested Tewksbury groups have concluded that the Fair Share Housing Center numbers are based on a very intricate, believable spreadsheet that accounts for economic and social criteria and developed and undeveloped land area. He noted that because all of the negotiations are held in executive session there is no way to know what number is being discussed or if any settlements have occurred. Mr. Cassa noted that the most likely site for a builders remedy lawsuit would be the Bellemead site, south of Route 78. Discussion ensued regarding the NJPDES permit for sewer discharge for the Bellemead site. When asked by Ms. Ace, Mr. Cassa noted that the Fair Share Housing Center is funded by the NJ Builders Association.

Mr. Cassa spoke of the series of recommendations from the Master Plan report. When asked by Mr. Teasdale their biggest concerns, Mr. Cassa noted that, under the present process, the public will not know what is being decided because it is not open. Mrs. Frey noted that they didn't support the future land use and economic sustainability issue.

Ms. Ace applauded the hours and effort that Mrs. Frey and Mr. Cassa put into this issue. She expressed frustration with things not being transparent.

Mr. Colitti opined that Tewksbury is at a tug of war between the Highlands Preservation and affordable housing obligations.

Mr. Mackie echoed Ms. Ace and Mr. Colitti and applauded Mr. Cassa and Mrs. Frey for their dedication. Mr. Mackie opined that unfortunately it is not in the hands of science anymore.

Mrs. Kaufman agreed with previous statements and stated that these are living breathing documents and she opined that it is frustrating to those involved trying to highlight how the protections that are existing should remain over what is being proposed.

Mr. Connor thanked both Mrs. Frey and Mr. Cassa for their presentation and opined it is a moving target.

Mr. Teasdale thanked Mrs. Frey and Mr. Cassa for the information provided and thanked Mr. Connor for asking them to present their knowledge to the Commission. Mr. Teasdale reported that he saw a video of Teddy Murphy encouraging people to vote and to get involved in their local municipalities. He noted that Mrs. Frey and Mrs. Murphy were on

the Environmental Commission together for years and accomplished so much for Tewksbury Township.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Ace made a motion to adjourn at 9:32 p.m. Mrs. Kaufman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana L. Goodchild
Land Use Administrator