

**TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
October 16, 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 7:35 p.m., roll call taken and a quorum established.

Present: Chairman Chris Teasdale, Mario Colitti, Mary Ace arrived at 7:40 p.m., Bruce Mackie, Hope Kaufman and Geoffrey Connor.

Absent: Matt Grobert, Glenn Likus and Michael Schlaefer, 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.

Mr. Teasdale welcomed the Commission's newest member, Hope Kaufman. Mrs. Kaufman introduced herself and explained that she's been a Tewksbury resident for approximately 5 years and is a landscape architect and formerly managed large scale projects for Bloomberg. She noted that she is on the Parks Committee and was formerly on the Scenic Roads and Bridges Commission.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Teasdale opened the meeting up to the public.

Dawn Pogosaew, 34 Ridge Road, Lebanon was present and reminded the Commission that she is the Conservation Chair for the Tewksbury Woman's Club as well as the Co-leader for the Hunterdon County Chapter of the Native Plant Society. Mr. Teadale noted that Mrs. Pogosaew has been before the Commission before to discuss her project at Pascale Farm Park. Mrs. Pogosaew was present again regarding the continuation of her work at Pascale Farm Park and explained that she is proposing a mowing schedule for next year between the Township Department of Public Works and the School; the proposed change would reduce man hours and provide more meadows for bird habitat, etc. The Commission studied the photos presented by Mrs. Pogosaew while she explained that the proposal is to mow around the ponds and a path around the field; the meadow would be mowed 2 times per year to allow growth during the summer for nesting habitat.

Mrs. Pogosaew also spoke of the Pascale Arboretum and presented the Commission with the list of seedlings that she planted. When asked if there are any invasives, she

explained that she removed them all except two (2) Norway Maples which she would like to remove but needs approval. She noted that she would also like to remove the Black Walnut because the brick pathway is littered with Black Walnuts. Nine (9) trees have been planted; three (3) American Dwarf Chestnuts, three (3) Prickly Ash and two (2) American Holly that were donated by Back to Nature and a Magnolia and River Birch. Five hundred plant plugs were put in the meadow area and 200 plant plugs elsewhere.

Mrs. Pogosaew also spoke about the wet meadow by the Township's pole barn in the rear of Pascale Farm Park. She explained that the Township does not normally mow this field but there are horseback riders and dog walkers that would like a path so she suggested that a path be mowed to the existing woodland path. Eventually a ditch or some type of rain garden needs to be considered to divert water from the pole barn.

Discussion ensued regarding the dying apple trees and Mrs. Pogosaew suggested having an arborist prune and care for the trees at least one (1) day a year. She also noted that she's been working in the park for almost two (2) years and has not noticed a lot of deer damage. She explained that she sprayed the choke berries and the deciduous holly to prevent damage by the deer.

When asked by Mr. Teasdale how the Environmental Commission can help with the mowing plan, Mrs. Pogosaew explained that the Commission needs to express support so she can relay that to the Township Committee and school. When asked by Mr. Colitti if she needs volunteers for the manual work, Mrs. Pogosaew explained that she does get some Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts in the Spring. There was discussion about having a Community Day similar to the Morris County Parks system.

Mrs. Pogosaew offered to put some research material together to back up her claims regarding the reduced mowing plan. When asked by Mr. Teasdale if there is any proprietary issues with the Parks Committee, Mrs. Kaufman explained that the Parks Committee has supported Mrs. Pogosaew's project from the beginning. Mr. Teasdale requested that Ms. Goodchild produce a map of the Pascale Farm park so the meadows and mowed paths can be identified. Mrs. Kaufman opined that one of the issues is the confusion about mowing responsibility between the school and Township DPW.

Mr. Teasdale noted that there appeared to be three (3) issues, removal of invasive trees, a mowing plan and drainage near the pole barn. He suggested tackling one (1) item at a time. Mrs. Pogosaew agreed to focus on the mowing issue first and return to the Commission with that plan to seek support.

There being no additional audience comments or questions, Mr. Teasdale closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

MINUTES

➤ September 11, 2017

Mr. Connor made a motion to approve the minutes of September 11, 2017. Mr. Colitti

seconded the motion. All were in favor. Ms. Ace and Mrs. Kaufman abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Connor 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 4, 2017 from Shana Goodchild re: Appl. No. 17-09, Block 31, Lot 34, expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming structure and setback variances
- b) A letter dated October 11, 2017 from Shana Goodchild re: Appl. No. 17-11, Block 19, Lot 20 setback variance to re-build pre-existing non-conforming structure.

The Commission discussed item b) above and had no comment since there is no change to the footprint.

The Commission discussed item a) above and there was concern regarding the location of the septic tank in the stream buffer. Mr. Mackie was asked to bring that concern up during the Land Use Board hearing.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

➤ Updates – Land Use Board

Mr. Mackie noted that at the last meeting the Board memorialized some prior approvals and heard an informal discussion regarding a caretaker cottage and subdivision for a potential vineyard along Cold Brook Road.

Mr. Mackie reported that there was a petition from the Citizens to Save Tewksbury, Residence Alliance for Neighborhood Preservation and Alliance for Historic Hamlets regarding the ongoing affordable housing discussions. Because it is litigation the discussions by the Township Committee and its professionals are not open to the public. The Land Use Board requested a joint meeting with the Township Committee and that will take place on November 1, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in Executive Session.

Mr. Teasdale reported that AT&T approached the Township Committee to put a cell tower on the existing Oldwick Fire Company property. He reminded the Commission that when the cell tower was proposed on the Melick Orchard the Environmental Commission's recommendation was to utilize existing structures, such as the steeple in the former Methodist church in Oldwick (now the antique shop). Cellco has negotiated a deal with the owner of the former church to locate the infrastructure in the steeple. AT&T wants their own pole so they can have a higher location and better coverage. The owner of the former church was present at the Township Committee meeting and noted that there is room in the steeple for additional carriers and Cellco is willing to give the next level of infrastructure to another cell company. The Township Committee rejected the request to allow a cell tower on the Oldwick Fire Company property.

➤ Pascale Pond – Water Chestnuts

Mr. Teasdale confirmed with Ms. Goodchild that the budget continues to hold money for the herbicide treatment for the ponds

➤ 2017 RHA Community Well Water Testing Update
Return dates October 18 & 19 – 7 to 8:30 a.m.

Mr. Mackie reported that he and Mr. Teasdale received an e-mail from Ms. Goodchild that to date 61 kits have been sold for the Wednesday return date and 57 kits for Thursday. Mr. Connor noted that he is helping on Thursday and Mr. Grobert is scheduled to help on Wednesday. Mr. Colitti agreed to help if anyone is unable to volunteer.

Mr. Colitti noted that he attended the Raritan Headwaters Country Fair fundraiser and it was very successful.

Mrs. Kaufman reported that the Township Committee dissolved the Forest Advisory Board and Norman Diegnan has tried, unsuccessfully, to reinstate it but there has been no interest. As a result of not having a current Community Forestry Management Plan the Township is not eligible for any of the funds available for the Emerald Ash Borer. The Scenic Roads and Bridges Commission has discussed the impact the Emerald Ash Borer has had on the Ash trees in the township right of ways and from the Parks Committee standpoint there is concern about trees falling and people getting hurt. Mrs. Kaufman asked if the Environmental Commission has considered the issue. Mr. Teasdale stated that the Commission is aware that the State is going to lose millions of Ash trees and has discussed the cost of the treatment for an individual Ash tree. Mrs. Kaufman noted that she personally has 22 Ash trees and they are saving five (5) of them at a treatment cost of \$10,000 a year. She is hoping that some of the volunteer groups can push the Township Committee to take a position on the problem as it is just the first wave of issues with trees. Mr. Connor asked if the Environmental Commission could take on the duties of the Forest Advisory Board. Mrs. Kaufman explained that she was on the Forest Advisory Board and the Township Committee merged it with the Parks Committee. Eventually it was dismissed altogether and the Township stopped participating in the program. Mr. Teasdale pointed out that the Township Committee ultimately decided to stop participating in the Community Forestry Management Plan program. Mrs. Kaufman noted that Norman Diegnan would be willing to speak to the Environmental Commission at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Teasdale suggested that Mrs. Kaufman speak to Mr. Diegnan to see if he can attend the December meeting to discuss his concerns to which she agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Colitti made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Mackie seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana L. Goodchild
Land Use Administrator