

**TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
February 12, 2018**

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 7:32 p.m., roll call taken and a quorum established.

Present: Chris Teasdale, Chairman, Mario Colitti, Bruce Mackie, Mary Ace, Geoffrey Connor, Glenn Likus and Hope Kaufman, Alt. #1

Absent: Matt Grobert 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 25, 2018.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those present stood and pledged allegiance to the American flag.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Teasdale opened the meeting up to the public.

Debra Dillon, corner of Vlietown and Cold Brook Roads was present and explained that her husband's family has lived in the area since the 1950's and they are very familiar with Oldwick and the Cold Brook. She noted that the Cold Brook was once a small brook which has now turned into a raging river from excessive stormwater. Mr. Teasdale explained that Mrs. Dillon's letter is part of the correspondence and that the Commission would discuss the issue during that time.

There being no additional public participation, Mr. Teasdale closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

MINUTES

➤ December 11, 2017

Mr. Connor made a motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2017. Mr. Likus seconded the motion. All were in favor. Mr. Mackie and Mrs. Kaufman abstained.

➤ January 8, 2018

Mr. Mackie made a motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2018 with a correction to page two (2). Mr. Mackie seconded the motion. All were in favor. Ms Ace abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

- a) A letter dated February 5, 2018 from Shana Goodchild re: Appl. No. 17-13, Block 42, Lot 4, Dr. Frank and Elena Schwab Minor Subdivision, Conditional Use Variance and Setback Variance.
- b) A letter dated January 30, 2018 from Charles and Debra Dillon, 35 Vliettown Road, Oldwick re: Oldwick Stormwater/Dillon Property.

The Commission discussed item b) above and Mr. Teasdale noted that the Commission was provided with Mr. and Mrs. Dillon's letter and supporting documentation along with an e-mail from the Township Engineer date November 20, 2017. Mr. Teasdale read the Township Engineer's e-mail into the record. Mrs. Dillon noted that the e-mail from the Township Engineer was in response to her complaints about the drainage issue. She explained that the drainage issue has been on-going for over 10 years and it has bounced back and forth between the Township and the County with no solution to date. Mrs. Dillon opined that projects continue to be approved with no consideration given to downstream residents. When asked by Mr. Teasdale to elaborate on the approvals, Mrs. Dillon listed new trenches, driveways, and repaving of parking. She explained that the quantity of water is too great for the existing culvert. She disagreed that the fix is as simple as cleaning out the culvert or improved maintenance as was suggested by the Township Engineer in his November, 2017 e-mail. She noted that a few years ago the Township tried to dig a canal south of the culvert and the previous owner, Charlie Chapin, stopped them because it was his property and it was encumbered with a conservation easement. She added that after the trenching work invasives such as Asian grass began to flourish. Between the grasses and sediment it has killed all of the trees and natural vegetation. Mrs. Dillon noted that there was a lake at the corner of Miller Ave. that used to collect the stormwater but it was filled in years ago. She opined that the trench installed on the Oldwick athletic fields and Melick orchard has contributed to the problem as well. Mr. Likus opined that the vegetation has restricted the flow of water. When asked by Mr. Teasdale if she has spoken to the Lamington Conservancy, Mrs. Dillon responded in the negative but noted that she has spoken to the Raritan Headwaters Association. When asked by Ms. Ace if Dave Pfeifer is aware of the situation, Mrs. Dillon responded in the positive. When Ms. Ace asked about the Township's stormwater ordinance, Mr. Likus noted that it is very comprehensive and any additional impervious coverage added requires the property owner to compensate by installing drywells, etc. When asked by Mrs. Kaufman if she has hired an engineer, Mrs. Dillon responded in the positive and noted that she will be receiving a report from them soon and will forward it to the Township and Township Engineer. When asked by Mrs. Kaufman what the Environmental Commission can do for her, Mrs. Dillon asked the Commission to acknowledge that the Township has a stormwater issue that needs to be managed properly either by slowing the velocity of the water or by collecting it properly. Mrs. Dillon opined that individual properties should not be tied into a municipal storm drain. When asked by Mr. Colitti if she has brought this up to the Land Use Board or Township Committee, Mrs. Dillon noted that the last Land Use Board meeting was cancelled and

she will be attending the Township Committee meeting tomorrow night. Mrs. Dillon noted that the Schwab family has purchased the Chapin property and she feels that nothing should be approved until the drainage issue is resolved. When asked by Mr. Teasdale how much water a drywell holds, Mr. Likus explained that it depends on the perc rate of the soils. He noted that the Township could create a large pond which might help regulate the flow or clean out the water way so the water gets to the Cold Brook quicker. He opined that the watershed has not changed and there has been little development in the area; all new projects that have been constructed have drywell systems. Mr. Likus opined that the silt and debris is preventing the water from flowing. Mrs. Dillon disagreed and opined that the amount of water has increased significantly. Mr. Teasdale asked Mrs. Dillon to share her engineer's report with the Commission.

Mrs. Dillon also brought to the Commission's attention the cutting of trees along Vlietown Road (on Township property) in order to extend electric service to the Platt property. She explained that former Superintendent, Hayden Hull, indicated that the Township had funding to replant and she does not want that to fall by the wayside. Mrs. Kaufman explained that the Township has a memorandum of understanding with the quarry; money is put into an account by the quarry for the Township to purchase trees. The issue is the Township has the money to buy trees but does not have the manpower to plant trees. Mr. Teasdale suggested a volunteer effort to plant the trees if necessary.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding item a) above and the Commission had the following concerns about the request for subdivision. Mr. Teasdale offered to outline the concerns and send them to the Land Use Board to which the Commission agreed.

Mr. Likus left the meeting during the discussion at approximately 9:10 p.m.

- The property has been identified as a potential target for farmland preservation at some future point. Subdividing the property and allowing the development of a new home and/or estate will severely compromise the integrity of the land as a farm in future years.
- The soil classifications of this property (Township ERI: *Soil Series*, fig. 4a; *Depth to Restrictive Layer*, fig. 4b; *Seasonal High Water Table Depth*, fig. 4c; *Hydrologic Soil Grouping*, fig. 4d; *Septic Suitability*, fig. 4e; *Erodibility*, fig. 4f; and *Drainage Class*, fig. 4g) combine to designate the majority of this property as Prime Farmland Soils.
- The farm is at the rise of a small crest (peak elevation of a little over 200 feet). Drainage moves both southeast into the highest category waters of the Lamington River (via the Cold Brook) and, more problematically, northeast into the Cold Brook via a drainage swale. The latter is of particular concern, as the Environmental Commission spent an hour listening to informal testimony from a neighbor who lives in that drainage pathway of storm-water runoff from local sources that has continually flooded their property. Creation of a proposed Lot 4.01 could seriously aggravate the drainage issue, as a new house, garage,

extended driveway, pool, patios, tennis courts, and the like are added to the farmland.

- Cold Brook Road has been designated as a Scenic Road in our Township for a distinct reason: the view shed is beautiful and there are only four farmhouses on the road, each well-spaced from the others. Appurtenant farm buildings support the rural nature of the Township. Because the Land Use Board has little control over aesthetics (e.g., witness the stone castle under construction approximately 300 yards from this proposed subdivision), it would be prudent to protect the Scenic designation by not allowing a subdivision.

For these and other reasons, the Environmental Commission strongly urged the Land Use Board to not grant a subdivision of the property.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Updates – Land Use Board

No update as the most recent meeting was cancelled.

- Pascale Pond – Water Chestnuts

Mr. Teasdale had nothing new to report.

Mr. Colitti offered to e-mail the Times of Tewksbury and send notice to the schools via the virtual backpack for the Raritan Headwaters Annual Stream clean-up on April 14th from 9 a.m. to noon.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Ace made a motion to adjourn at 9:23 p.m. Mr. Mackie seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Shana L. Goodchild
Land Use Administrator