

Minutes for the Environmental Commission September 12, 2019

Call to order – The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Open Public Meetings Statement – Notice of this meeting has been provided to the Hunterdon County Democrat and was posted on the bulletin board at Town Hall according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act. A copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the office of the Township Clerk.

Roll call: Members present: Andreoli, Clapp, Coyne, Hamtil, Spille, Urbanski, Dale (TC liaison).
Members excused: Beaumont, Haug.

Approval of minutes: June 13, 2019 – approved with no changes.

Opportunity for Public Comment - no members of the public were present.

PFNA contamination –The members had previously discussed this as the SHRHS had tested positive. Other organizations, including the Delaware Riverkeeper, Stonybrook, NJ Conservation Foundation, and many others have raised questions about this widespread contamination and how to mitigate. Will keep close watch on this.

PennEast Update – Mike provided first what was to be the good news about Penn East: the NJDEP denied PennEast's application as it was not administratively complete.

Recent better news: the 3rd Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals recently ruled in favor of the NJ Attorney General's appeal of the lower court ruling granting PennEast the right to access and seize (eminent domain) 42 properties of which the state has an interest in. The court ruled that the state has immunity under the 11th amendment of the Constitution and can't be sued by a private company in federal court. PE basically violated the 11th amendment. The properties involved are all state owned, including farmland preserved lands and easements.

It would be very difficult for PE to do a reroute, especially in West Amwell. Other options for PE are to use the Adelpia route in PA and cross the Delaware into Mercer County or have FERC condemn the properties (unlikely). Mike feels the pipeline is dead in West Amwell.

Information for the Delaware River Cleanup – It was noted that the information was posted on the website. Jennifer said that it was on list serve (6th grade interest), Nella had contacted the girl scouts, and Cathy had contacted the boy scouts.

Sustainable Jersey re-certification due 2020. – Members discussed this and decided not to re-apply, citing the amount of work involved and the questionable benefits to West Amwell.

NRI update due - The last update was in 2015. Members questioned as to why this would need to be done so soon. Cathy will check with the Planning Board chair, since this probably only needs to be done with every update of the Master Plan.

Plastic and polystyrene pollution –ANJEC offered information and assistance with regulations/ordinances for the reduction of plastic pollution on the local level. Members discussed this and agreed that WA has very few businesses in the township and that the largest, Quick Chek, is already using paper cups.

Contamination of groundwater on Route 179 – The Planning Board requested information if we had any. Cathy checked the NJDEP's site remediation page and found that the DOT yard and Lehigh had been remediated. There was one property, 1451 Route 179 that had not been remediated. This information was sent to the Planning Board. Members did not know of any other contaminated areas along the route.

Lantern Fly – Present now in Lambertville, probably already in West Amwell. Members reviewed the information on the NJ Department of Agriculture site and decided to have copies printed and also have the information posted on the website. Dave C. mentioned that a beneficial insect is being studied, but will not be ready for a while.

PSE+G – Members reviewed the freshwater permit application. It appears as though PSE&G is replacing some towers with monopoles.

Ringoes Rental, LLC, - block 8, lot 62. Reviewed site plan. This is just to replace a shed that had burned.

Opportunity for Public Comment – During the meeting, Jim Devine presented himself as a soon to be resident on Skillman Street. He appeared interested in the EC as he has worked for legislators with environmental concerns, both on state and federal levels. He will contact us when he is a resident for a possible position on the EC.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:58.

Minutes prepared by C. Urbanski