

## Minutes for the Environmental Commission January 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Members Present: Beaumont, Clapp, Haug, Neufeld, Piel, Urbanski, Zuzov, Dale (TC liaison).

Members Absent: Andreoli, Van der Veen.

Oaths of Allegiance – Beaumont read and signed the Oath of Allegiance.

Approval of minutes – November 12, 2015 – approved by the members, with corrections. Beaumont abstained.

Opportunity for Public Comment – No members of the public were present.

319h grant for the Alexauken Creek – update: Cathy noted that she had not heard from the DEP lately and that she and Steve have sent the DEP all of their requested updated information. E-mails were received by Cathy from both Steve and Nick Zripko just before our meeting today with a possible indication that the proposed grant projects would be workable and approved, with conditions.

Planting of the Music Mountain (The Estates) median strip: Lengthy discussion by the members as to tree/shrub/native grass plantings which were deer resistant/able to resist salt damage/tolerant of drought/able to thrive in a median strip with questionable soil/and ease of maintenance. It was noted that the median strip had been planted with plum trees by the original developer and that the trees were in the process of dying.

Residents had wished the trees removed as they were a hazard and an eyesore. West Amwell's DPW (road crew) had removed the trees and the landscape rocks and planted the median in grass. This was still not acceptable to some of the residents.

It was also noted that the property in question was owned by West Amwell. Members questioned the use of taxpayer money to provide landscaping for a single neighborhood. Members agreed that the cost and safety were serious considerations.

Cathy discussed recommendations by the DPW, as to provide plantings around the two lamp posts and leave the remainder in grass to allow ease of maintenance for the DPW. Members agreed that this would be a solution. Member Clapp to study/find low growing shrubs that would work and report at the next meeting.

Soil Removal Ordinance: Possible amendment carried to next meeting.

Proposed Flood Hazard Rule Changes: ACR 249/SCR180: Rules Adopted: which prevents Governor Christie and the DEP from adopting the Flood Hazard Area Protection Rules as they were proposed. EC members discussed this and Rob had some serious comments and insights: the original proposal was to streamline permitting for flood hazard regulations, fresh water wetland rules, and stormwater

regulations and combine them into one regulation, thus omitting overlap of rules with different standards and excess permitting needs. The DEP will now have to address this.

Website review: As dictated by the Township Committee Resolution, Cathy reported that our website information is up to date.

The Compost Man: Members discussed a proposal to compost food waste in the township. Most agreed that any food waste generated went to animals or the compost pile or that residents would not want to separate waste from garbage. Cathy mentioned that the “man” might be present at the next recycling committee meeting and will advise interested EC members as to his attendance.

Stormwater subcommittee: Art, Joan and Cathy reappointed. The clerk requested that we provide a different flyer this year.

Carry over items from 2015:

Dave’s comments addressed:

Dave could not find anyone who could help us with the archeological study for the Alexauken Creek project.

Basin maintenance at Music Mountain - Lambertville violations of municipal property – Cathy will discuss at the next Township Committee meeting.

Trails at Music Mtn. – Cathy advised that the Open Space Committee has been working on this, but there are problems with steep slopes.

Reduction of mowing by planting wildflower meadows or warm season grasses. Mow once a year and provide habitat. To be discussed at the next Township Committee meeting.

Water Quality Management Plan – Rob inquired if the Clerk could provide the EC with a paper copy. Cathy will check with her.

Congratulations: To Clapp for his prize winning Christmas decorations.

Open to the Public: no members of the public were present.

Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cathy Urbanski.