

Minutes for the Environmental Commission July 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

Members present: Clapp, Neufeld, Urbanski, Van der Veen, Dale (TC liaison).

Members excused: Andreoli, Piel, Zuzov.

Members absent: Beaumont, Haug.

Approval of minutes – the minutes from April 14, 2016 were approved.

No members of the public were present for comment.

Mara Tippet, our current Watershed Ambassador and now employed by Raritan Headwaters Association, attended the meeting. She presented an overview of their watershed management and noted that a small portion of West Amwell was included in the Raritan watershed because of Back Brook. Fifty two sites in the watershed are continuously monitored for water quality and their well water testing program is important for residents and for determining trends in ground water contamination.

Mara discussed the importance of well water testing and recommended that yearly tests be done for coliform and nitrates. She also recommended that testing for lead, volatile organics, pesticides, etc. be done every 3-5 years.

Raritan Headwaters Association has been doing a trend analysis of groundwater for the past 30+ years. West Amwell last offered a well water testing program in 2013. Mara said that trends for West Amwell show:

An 8% increase in coliform (no trend).

A 78% increase in nitrates (animals, septic systems, fertilizers).

A 38 % increase in arsenic (the Piedmont region is high in arsenic and more testing is encouraged, noting that arsenic presence is also increasing watershed-wide).

Lead was not a problem and there was no trend or issue in the township.

Mara showed some NJDEP PWTAs (Private Well Testing Act) maps obtained from house sale data. 272 wells were from West Amwell.

Cathy furnished Mara with one of the flyers we used in 2013. Joan offered to send Mara the pdf file and would work with her on updating it.

Currently, well testing could still be done in September, October, or November, 2016 or starting in March, 2017. Cathy offered to discuss with members at the next meeting when hopefully more members would be present.

Art commented that while he did participate in the 2013 testing, he was not happy with the lab as they sent him the wrong vials and were not helpful in correcting his problem.

The Sourland Conservancy requested our assistance with the serious problem with the Emerald Ash borer. Biological controls were mentioned and they wanted to know if the EC or other WAT municipal body would be interested in pursuing this. Also discussed was the "EAB preparation checklist for New Jersey Municipalities". John offered that all woodlot management residents had already been alerted. Dave commented that owners of ash trees had been told to remove trees now, before they are infected. The members decided to contact the Sourland Conservancy and recommend that they pursue biological controls on the Green Acres, NJDEP owned property (the former Lambertville Water Co, as it is a large tract with many ash trees) and have them contact the DEP for approval.

Cathy discussed her 6/30 meeting with Steve Sousa regarding the final plans for the 319h grant for the municipal property. Wildflower meadows are planned to reduce stormwater runoff, there will be an enlarged detention basin at the north end of the parking lot, and larger trees will be planted between the recycling and garbage depots. The project will be low maintenance, as the DPW is tied up with the Music Mountain median strip maintenance. The planned planting will be in September. Our engineer has been consulted and we await final approval from the Township Committee.

It was noted that the median strip at Music Mtn. Blvd. had been planted with 17 japanese dogwood trees and the plantings around the lampposts are still to be done.

Stormwater inserts have been done, thanks to Joan. They are to be sent out with the next tax bill. Members were provided with a sample.

Decision by the members to not pay the ANJEC dues this year, but to pay part at the end of 2016 and the remainder in 2017 to cover our 2017 dues. We are on a tight budget.

A fracking ban ordinance and resolution were discussed. Some members felt that a resolution (provided to them) would be sufficient and that an ordinance would not be necessary as we do not have gas/oil resources in the Township. Cathy explained that this was in response to requests from neighboring municipalities to join them with an ordinance. Kingwood, Alexandria, and Holland have done ordinances, and Hopewell is considering it. This would be specifically sent to the Delaware River Basin Commission to encourage them to continue with their moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the Basin. Agreement as to a resolution which will be presented to the Township Committee for approval, and if an ordinance were to be done, it should focus only on oil and gas, not fracking for water wells.

The site plan and hydrology report for Block 3, Lot 21 were reviewed. Dave took the information to review and Art provided copies for him of the report from the Planning Board Planner and Engineer to review.

Members decided that the EC should update the Soil Ordinance and all agreed to do so at the August meeting.

No members of the public were present for comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cathy Urbanski.