

MINUTES

East Amwell Township Environmental Commission Business Meeting October 25, 2010 7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: The October 25, 2010 Business Meeting of the East Amwell Township Environmental Commission was called to order by Chairperson, S. Parsons at 7:35 PM.

In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, S. Parsons announced that this is the Regular Business Meeting of the Environmental Commission, as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat on January 28, 2010. A copy of tonight's agenda was filed with the Township Clerk and the Township Committee, forwarded to the Hunterdon County Democrat, and the Trenton Times Newspaper, distributed to the various East Amwell Township Committees and Boards, and was posted on the Township Bulletin Board.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: S. Parsons, M. Petrus, T. Robbi, D. Sageser, F. Clair, E. Feinberg,
J. Bradstreet, J. Corboy, (Secretary)

ABSENT: J. Angelone, D. Kellogg, T. Martin, B. Hummel

New member, Jeff Bradstreet, was welcomed by all prior to the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None received.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES: September 27, 2010 – Business Meeting

The minutes of the September 27, 2010 business meeting were motioned for approval by M. Petrus, and with a second from T. Robbi, were approved with one correction – E. Feinberg should be listed as absent. There were two abstentions.

LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS TO TONIGHT'S AGENDA:

1. Note from J. Luhrs, 10/19/10, re: 2011 Budget Requests (to be discussed under New Business)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS: none received

REPORTS:

a. Planning Board – D. Sageser reported that the Planning Board discussed at some length - solar panels - ground based solar panels – solar farms. There is not too much concern about building-based solar panels, but more concern about ground based panels. The Township has no regulations regarding them. F. Banisch presented some guidelines/options regarding regulations at the meeting. It is declared of a beneficial use

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by the State. The Planning Board is hoping that the Environmental Commission can provide assistance with this issue. Impervious coverage and erosion are concerns to be discussed. T. Robbi stated that the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) is creating rules for solar on preserved farms. T. Robbi presented an issue about farmers placing ground based solar panels on a farm. How does this qualify for farmland assessment – it is no longer producing an agricultural product. There may be zoning restrictions – a building permit will be needed. The beneficial use is declared by State law, but negatives must be considered. E. Feinberg stated that you have an issue with the transmission line from panels to another location. Members discussed further and decided that they should wait until the report from F. Banisch is received. D. Sageser will be sure it is forwarded to the Environmental Commission.

b. Township Committee – T. Martin was absent this evening. Thus, no report was received.

c. Recycling Committee – M. Petrus informed members that the Recycling Committee did not meet due to a lack of quorum.

d.. Farmland/Open Space Preservation – T. Robbi informed members that the State has a program that allows direct purchase of agricultural rights from farmers (Direct Agricultural Easement Program). Advantage to both the municipality and to the County is that they are not involved – no funds to purchase needed. Prime soil is an important feature of this program. Soils are rated and the farms having the highest quality soil have an advantage. Acreage, proximity to other preserved sites and prime soils are highly important in this program.

e. Sourlands Municipal Alliance Council – T. Robbi stated that there is now representation from all five towns in the Alliance. He reported that it is no longer Sourlands Municipal Alliance Council. It is now called Sourland Alliance. F. Banisch produced a management plan just in time for the last meeting. There was no time to review it. Hopefully, it will be discussed and approved at the next meeting.

f. Environmental Page on Website – S. Parsons reported that T. Robbi's latest column "Notes from the Woods" was added. No other new information has been submitted.

g. Public Outreach – M. Petrus stated that he had not contacted the school for youth members. The Recycling Committee has not had any interest from students either.

h. Site Review - No applications received from either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The previously discussed Conservation Easement site reviews (3) are being reviewed with an addition of one more. Members discussed timing for a site visit to the fourth property. T. Robbi mentioned the fact that in Montgomery Township all preserved land and conservation easements are considered Open Space (cannot be built on) and therefore, are of interest to their Open Space Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Conservation Easements – S. Parsons stated that a map is available on the Township website that was posted in May 2009. It currently shows more than just conservation

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easements. She is now working on the map with an associate from Banisch to clarify the map for just conservation easements. As soon as it is updated, it will be posted on the website.

T. Robbi informed members of a recent e-mail stating that there will be a Hunterdon County Green Table meeting on November 18, 2010 to discuss: "An Update on Easement Monitoring." It was sent by South Branch Watershed Association and the meeting will be held at their Education Center on Lilac Drive. Hopefully some of the Environmental Commission members will be able to attend.

M. Petrus stated that he did attend the "Green Fest" meeting and it was not what he expected

b. Sustainable East Amwell – D. Sageser stated that he has nothing new to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Road Salt – Synopsis of the recent Township Committee meeting discussing this topic has not been received from J. Angelone. Secretary did e-mail him to request this information.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. 2011 Budget Requests - Members reviewed the 2010 budgets. Secretary reminded them that the Newsletter, if there is one in 2011, will be the responsibility of the Recycling Committee. M. Petrus reminded members that they did run short of prizes at the 4-H Fair, although he does hope to obtain more donations for prizes. Members decided to increase the Other Expenses to \$200 from \$150 requested last year. It also looks as though the secretary's salary could be decreased. Secretary read off the budget requests for 2011 and motion was made to accept these budget requests by T. Robbi and seconded by M. Petrus. The vote was unanimously in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE: All correspondence was listed on the 10/25/10 agenda.

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OPEN TO COMMISSION MEMBERS: T. Robbi mentioned the recent e-mails concerning the logging proposal on Round Mountain – discussed at recent Freeholders meetings in Flemington. County plans to start logging trees in certain parts of the County parks. By selling the trees, it was hoped to generate approximately \$4200 for the County budgets. The project is currently halted because of the objections received from Readington Township. T. Robbi suggested that the Environmental Commission keep an eye on this issue because of the County parks located in East Amwell Township.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: No public present.

ADJOURN: 8:35 PM Motion for adjournment was received from M. Petrus and F. Clair seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Joyce S. Corboy, Secretary

cc: Env. Com. Members	Board of Adjustment	Board of Health
Twp. Com. & Clerk	Democrat Newspaper	Recreation Com.
Twp. Bulletin Brd.	Trenton Times	Recycling Com.
Planning Board	Associate Members	Agric. Adv. Com.
Farmland & Open Space Preservation		