

MINUTES

East Amwell Township Environmental Commission
Regular Business Meeting
April 27, 2015
7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: The April 27, 2015 Business Meeting of the East Amwell Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:38 P.M. In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, this is a regular Business Meeting of the East Amwell Environmental Commission, as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat on March 5, 2015. 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: T. Robbi, J. Bradstreet, D. Sageser, J. Frederick, D. Schleifer
M.Prendamano (secretary)

ABSENT: E. Johanson, B. Hummel, J. Angelone, D. Kellogg

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES: March 23, 2015

Minutes were presented for approval. D. Schleifer noted that his name needs to be taken off of the list of 'present'. T. Robbi suggested a change under FOSPC report. J. Frederick made a motion to approve the amended minutes of March 23rd. J. Bradstreet seconded the motion. All members were in favor of approving the minutes with two abstentions from D. Schleifer and J. Frederick.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS: None

LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS: None

T. Robbi made a motion to open to the public at this time. D. Schleifer seconded the motion and all members were in favor of opening the meeting to the public.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Alexandra Walczak the Americorp Watershed Ambassador for watershed management area eight was present. She presented about her program on environmental education and conservation. Her role is to act as a liaison between Raritan Headwaters and the local Environmental Commissions and the community. It is a non-profit member supported organization. Their purpose is to protect and preserve the watershed region and to raise public awareness.

She is involved in doing visual habitat assessments and environmental presentations to any interested group. She inspects the insect larvae in a particular water body to determine the water quality. She also does an assessment of riparian buffers.

MINUTES

East Amwell Township Environmental Commission Regular Business Meeting April 27, 2015 7:30 p.m.

The goal of an ambassador is to educate residents about the dangers of pesticides, promoting the planting of native species and controlling water runoff. They also promote the planting of rain gardens and the use of rain barrels. Ms. Walczak discussed the many benefits of diverting run-off water into rain gardens.

Mr. Schleifer added that riparian buffers should be of special concern in agricultural areas like East Amwell Township. Ms. Walczak noted that soil erosion is the number one non point source pollution. She feels that the best way to remedy this is by educating the public on best management practices that will also save farmers money. Also, well water is affected by pollution and residents should be encouraged to test their water and manage their run-off.

She noted that there are still grants available for the 319 area. Municipalities and non-profits can apply. D. Schleifer suggested bringing this information forward to farmers with preserved land through FOSPC.

The Commission thanked Ms. Walczak for her presentation and then closed the meeting to the public.

REPORTS:

a. Planning Board – D. Sageser reported that the board is trying to respond to the COAH situation. The plan will be compiled and then submitted for acceptance to the court on July 10th. Our town had an approved plan in the past. There is a general sense that East Amwell is not an appealing place for builder solution development due to the lack of public sewer and water.

b. Township Committee –Dart Sageser reported that the Township Committee is aware of the COAH situation and supports the effort to get our town in compliance with the new rules. They adopted the budget.

D. Schleifer inquired how many buildings have been cited by the building inspector with regard to the unfit unsafe building ordinance. D. Sageser replied that there have been four that have been cited. There has been discussion about other properties.

With regard to the Ringoes Village Study, the Committee met with the County engineering department and one of the suggestions was that the State vacates Route 179. The hope is that the road can be made a ‘Complete Street’ which means it would accommodate pedestrians, bikes etc. One of the other topics discussed was whether there is a better way to zone the village of Ringoes. Perhaps making some mixed use properties or multi-family homes. T. Robbi brought up the issue of septic system. D. Sageser noted that it would be up to the developer to provide a sufficient septic system.

MINUTES

East Amwell Township Environmental Commission Regular Business Meeting April 27, 2015 7:30 p.m.

He also added that a common well or water supply may help remedy the problem.

c. Recycling Committee – Inadvertently skipped.

d. Farmland/Open Space Preservation – T. Robbi reported that the 20 acres adjacent to the County Park fell through due to the need to sub-divide. The County engineering office declared the driveway unsafe.

e. Site Review Committee – No activity.

f. Public Outreach – Inadvertently skipped.

g. Conservation Easements – J. Bradstreet is stepping down as the head of this sub-committee. D. Schleifer and J. Frederick are on the committee. J. Bradstreet will continue to serve but will not lead the committee. He suggested the letter be changed as to who residents should contact. Then we need to schedule the visit. J. Bradstreet will send letters and track them on a spreadsheet. He was hoping someone could do the follow-up with the people who receive the letters and schedule the visit. J. Frederick offered to try and D. Schleifer will assist him. J. Frederick would like the process explained to him first. He will meet with J. Bradstreet and D. Schleifer to go over this.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Penn East Pipeline: E. Johanson was absent.

b. Greenfest – M. Prendamano reported that E. Johanson has secured someone to present about Monarch butterflies at the Environmental Commission table. She also has Milkweed seeds to hand out. D. Schleifer will be present. J. Frederick can also attend. He will help set up. T. Robbi suggested that someone take a look downstairs to see if there may be literature to put on the table. T. Robbi is leading a hike and will not be able to disassemble the table. D. Sageser will be there as well. J. Bradstreet can make some of the event but not the entire time. T. Robbi will check with D. Kellogg.

J. Frederick will help T. Robbi set up a laptop to display a slide show. M. Prendamano reported that there are many groups participating. The Girl Scouts will have an outdoor presentation. The school sent home flyers for the event. The Youth Members of the Recycling Committee will be participating as the 4H Hopper club.

NEW BUSINESS:

MINUTES

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Presentation by Alexandra Walczak. Meeting was open to the public earlier.

CORRESPONDENCE: All correspondence was listed on the 4/27/15 agenda.

LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS: None

OPEN TO COMMISSION MEMBERS: T. Robbi did submit a grant for the Cider Mill Preserve. He has not heard anything yet.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: No further comments received.

ADJOURN: 9:57 PM. Motion for adjournment was received from T. Robbi and J. Bradstreet seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Maria Prendamano, 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