

## MINUTES

### East Amwell Township Environmental Commission Regular Business Meeting September 28, 2015 7:30 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The September 28, 2015 Business Meeting of the East Amwell Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:37 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, D. Schleifer, D. Kellogg, J. Angelone (7:42 p.m.), D. Sageser, J. Frederick  
M.Prendamano (secretary)

**ABSENT:** E. Johanson, B. Hummel, J. Bradstreet

#### **PRESENTATION OF MINUTES:** July 27, 2015

Minutes were presented for approval. D. Sageser made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by D. Kellogg. All members voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes from the July 27, 2015 business meeting.

**PRESENTATION OF BILLS:** None. M. Prendamano noted that she has an updated copy of the budget for anyone interested.

**LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS:** None

#### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Flann Lippencot was present from the public. She noted that she had heard there is a vacancy on the Commission and came to observe a meeting. She may be interested in becoming a member.

#### **REPORTS:**

- a. Planning Board – D. Sageser reported that the Planning Board has been working on the COAH housing issue. They submitted for declaratory judgment which gives them until December 8<sup>th</sup> to submit a plan. They joined with about 200 towns to hire an expert to counter the recommendations of the Fair Share Housing. The consultant had a stroke over the summer and is recuperating. Subsequently a new consultant has been hired. The effort is to identify East Amwell as not an area for growth. The feeling is that the likelihood of new construction is very limited. Without public water and sewer it would be difficult to develop. Fair Share Housing statistics state that 40% of residents of New

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Jersey need affordable housing. The statistics are not likely realistic. Another interesting item for discussion was the potential for development on 202 and Old York Road. There is a piece of property approximately 50 acres owned by Bryce Thompson. If Mr. Thompson is agreeable to re-zoning the property this may potentially be the site of some housing units. D. Kellogg would like to ensure the water balance is correct as this would affect drainage easements. Also, there was an application by the Ridge golf course seeking an amendment to their zoning restrictions that would permit them to add some guest cottages, a tennis court and a swimming pool. They currently have 186 members and they have a cap at 200. The board is taking a look at their current zoning to see if they could be accommodated. D. Schleifer asked if there were any environmentally sensitive lands on the property for potential preservation as a condition of approval. D. Sageser noted that the AVTA has trails that traverse through the perimeter.

b. Township Committee – D. Sageser reported that the Committee is having a capital budget meeting this week. They are entertaining a proposal from the Historical Society to use the Clawson House as a museum. The advantage of leasing it to a non-profit would open doors for private grants and funding. There are a number of facilities around the state where this has been done. Rutgers landscaping did a design for landscaping around the house. Jim Davidson is actively trying to get donations to help beautify the site. T. Robbi hopes that the plantings will be native.

c. Recycling Committee – M. Prendamano reported that the Committee is seeking to improve recycling at the ball fields. They hope to label the receptacles and put them out on a one-to-one ratio. She noted that the new waste company is Premier.

d. Farmland/Open Space Preservation – T. Robbi reported that there is a new administrator, Pam Thier, who has previously worked with the DEP in their Green Acres program. Her office hours are Tuesdays 12-3 and Thursdays 9-12. Also, D&R Greenway and the Township have signed a management use agreement for the Ridge Road Assemblage. D&R is managing the hunting sites and the stewardship. They are forested lots on the northern side of Ridge Road.

There is a new preservation project in the eastern side of the township known as the Higgins property. There is approximately 400 acres included in this project. Much of the property is in the mountain. The first phase would be 147 acres which front on North Hill Road. The airpark is included in this project. There is also a large pond. NJCF will wind up owning a lot of the property and they have promised to do stewardship. They were involved in preserving the Somerset County side of the Higgins property. Some of the property is currently farmed but there is no plan to preserve it as a farm. There is a system of trails currently on the property. The pond has beavers living there.

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Green Acres sent around a compliance person to look at the signage on properties. They ensure that properties with public access do not have 'no trespassing' signs. He was pleased with our properties.

The next meeting is October 19 for anyone interested in attending. Another piece of news is that D. Kellogg has been elected as a trustee of the Hunterdon Land Trust. T. Robbi invited D. Kellogg to speak about Hunterdon Land Trust. D. Kellogg noted that the Hunterdon Land Trust is located at Dvoor Farm on the Route 12 Circle in Flemington. She added that their mission is land preservation, farmland preservation, open space and stewardship. They have a farmer's market to help local farmers connect with the community. Their goal is 10,000 acres in Hunterdon County and they are almost at 8,000 acres. She became involved by being on their land acquisition committee. She added that they are a very interesting and diverse group of individuals that are very passionate.

e. Site Review Committee – T. Robbi stated that there is potential project in Ringoes that hasn't been formalized yet.

f. Public Outreach – D. Kellogg reported that it went very well this year. She feels that revamping the booth helped. The volunteer board and games went well. The banner seems to have gone missing. It has been missing prior to the 4H Fair. If anyone has ideas or improvements she would like to hear them. D. Schleifer suggested that perhaps we could cut back on the volunteer spots. During his time there on Wednesday he spoke to only one person. D. Sageser thought the time slots could be prioritized. D. Kellogg stated she will consider that because she noted as well that some slots are not very busy.

g. Conservation Easements – J. Frederick reported that no one returned calls from the letters that were sent out. D. Kellogg's suggestion to put a date on the letter may help. If we do not hear back from the resident we can show up on the listed date. D. Schleifer also created a list of protocols for inspections. D. Sageser looked over the list. He doesn't believe we have any enforcement capability. D. Kellogg added that this issue has come up at Hunterdon Land Trust. She noted that it depends on the type of easement. She stated that they have two approaches. One is to bring in the State agency associated with the easement. The other option is working with the municipalities. The easements usually come with some sort of tax abatement. The municipality can threaten with the tax abatement if the resident is non-compliant. D. Sageser thinks that part of the problem is education. One of the easements on his property is not even listed on his deed or survey. T. Robbi stated that they are listed on the tax map.

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D. Sageser feels the protocol would be strictly for the use of the Commission. D. Schleifer stated that it should act as a procedural guide. J. Angelone feels that the idea of putting a date on the letter will generate cooperation. D. Schleifer added that he has applications for a municipal identification card. This would be useful when inspecting properties. The application should be turned in to T. Stahl. D. Schleifer asked the Commission if we should send certified letters. D. Sageser felt that would not be necessary. He does not want to seem too legalistic or aggressive. D. Schleifer asked what happens from the point after you find a violation. D. Sageser feels that it will vary from case to case. J. Angelone suggested making a recommendation on how to remedy the problem. D. Kellogg believes that many residents do not know what the requirements are.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

a. Penn East Pipeline: E. Johanson was not present. T. Robbi noted that they made a formal application and that there is an event in Trenton this week. D. Kellogg added that she scheduled well testing for the middle of November. The reason for the delay is that a professor from Princeton in Delaware has determined that the blasting from the pipeline will increase everyone's arsenic levels. Many residents want a baseline.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

M. Prendamano stated that M. Pasqua would like a representative from each committee to meet with her before October 9 to discuss the budget. D. Schleifer will meet with her.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** All correspondence was listed on the 9/28/15 agenda. M. Prendamano noted that Greenfest was approved for April 9, 2016.

#### **OPEN TO COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

D. Sageser wanted to share that the DeGoia property on Manners Road seems to be under demolition. There were some small housing units, greenhouses and a barn that are all gone. He inquired at the site and the gentleman stated that they are preparing the property for a conservation easement. He added that he could then sell the property to a company looking to buy an approved easement. The gentleman stated he had done a similar transaction with property in Alexandria Township. T. Robbi asked if they had a permit. D. Sageser stated that he did not believe that he had a permit. T. Robbi stated that the property is along the flood plain. J. Angelone noted that many former nurseries have a lot of pesticides and chemicals in the soil.

D. Schleifer wanted to take an opportunity to see how the commission felt about putting a Monarch Way Station on one of the preserved pieces of property. He suggested the Cider

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Mill Preserve. T. Robbi thought they may not be visible in the Cider Mill preserve and some of the property is mowed. D. Sageser suggested Clawson Park as a future site. T. Robbi suggested putting it in the budget for next year. D. Sageser thought someone could speak to Princeton Hydro and asking if they could include it in their project. D. Kellogg thought that the Colonial Sportsman Club could be approached. D. Schleifer will inquire with the club. D. Kellogg added that Hunterdon Land Trust has a source for free milkweed. She will get more details.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** The commission opened to the public and thanked Flann Lippencot for coming. D. Schleifer inquired as to her experience with conservation matters. Ms. Lippencot stated that she was a board member of the Stoneybrook Watershed Association. She also worked part time for the NJ Audubon society. She has lived here since 1982 and would like to get involved in the Environmental Commission. M. Prendamano stated she should see T. Stahl and pick up an application. She can also print a volunteer form from the Township website.

**ADJOURN: 8:50 PM.** Motion for adjournment was received from D. Kellogg and J. Angelone seconded the motion. All were in favor.

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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		