

MINUTES
East Amwell Township Environmental Commission
Regular Business Meeting
October 26, 2015
7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: The October 26, 2015 Business Meeting of the East Amwell Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:30 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 (7:35), D. Sageser, F. Lippincott, , J. Frederick , M.Prendamano (secretary)

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

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES: September 28, 2015

Minutes were presented for approval. D. Schleifer made note of a misspelling of his name and added language to the second page second paragraph. M. Prendamano will amend. D. Sageser made a motion to approve the amended minutes which was seconded by D. Kellogg. All members voted unanimously in favor of approving the minutes from the September 28, 2015 business meeting.

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

LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS: None

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: None present

REPORTS:

a. Planning Board – D. Sageser reported that there was a discussion initiated by the Ridge Golf course seeking to rezone the property to include an in ground pool and to permit up to eight guest cottages for members only. This was requested by the organization in an effort to stay competitive with other country clubs. There has been no objection raised to date. The golf course has not made a formal presentation as of this date. The total square footage of the guest houses is 6000 square feet. The planning board meeting was held by the proposed site. T. Robbi brought up a concern with impervious coverage. He suggested recommending using a rain garden or a bio retention basin.

The other issued discussed by the Planning Board is COAH. The suggested amount of 300 units for East Amwell is not realistic. D. Sageser noted that market rate versus affordable housing rate is a minimal difference. The general feeling with regard to

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COAH is that the numbers are untenable. The expert hired by the group of municipalities should have a number in December. We can have a group home or auxiliary housing. COAH housing rates are fair and reasonable. One option is to identify a particular site that might be appropriate as an inclusionary zone. The idea that has been discussed is the Thompson parcel on 202 by Old York Road. There are some wetlands on it but it can be developed. The apartments would be tax ratable and it may generate some enrollment at the school. The feeling is that it is better to file a plan on December 8th. T. Robbi inquired why apartments on farms do not qualify as affordable housing. F. Lippencott inquired whether or not that has been a traffic study on route 202. She added that when coming from the north it backs up for miles. D. Sageser noted that from Flemington to Ringoes there is hardly traffic. D. Schleifer asked what happens when to defined COAH apartments reach their ten year term do new units become available? D. Sageser replied that the landlord can opt out of COAH determination or re-apply to continue. The apartment owner of Peacock's opted out of registering them as COAH qualified.

b. Township Committee- D. Sageser reported that there was not a lot going on at the Township Committee meeting. He wanted to clarify that the Committee approved an ABC permit in July as they would for any other commercial entity. Someone complained to the SADC. The permit was approved by the State Police and he added that he was advised by the attorney that they could not deny the permit. Similar permits are granted to The Ridge and the Winery.

c. Recycling Committee – M. Prendamano reported that the Committee is going to purchase new recycling bins for the ball fields. D. Kellogg suggested that the Committee coordinate with AVLBL because she is not certain that AVLBL will be playing in the spring. M. Prendamano reported that W. Harrison attended a Recreation Committee meeting to speak to C. Kellogg and P. Fick about this. D. Schleifer asked if any other leagues use the fields. M. Prendamano replied that there were in fact some other leagues that do use them.

d. Farmland/Open Space Preservation – T. Robbi reported that Block 34 which is a 2 acre lot near Ridge Road is being bought by D&R Greenway for a low price. It is close to the Ridge Road assemblage. The Township would pick up the 'soft costs' which would include the survey.

The other property discussed by FOSPC is the Higgins property. This project is being organized by NJCF who have been instrumental in preserving the adjoining former Higgins tract in Hillsborough, Somerset County. It will require a significant amount of money. NJCF is seeking letters in support from other entities. The letter should be addressed to the County Planning Department. T. Robbi made a motion for the Environmental Commission to prepare a letter in support of this acquisition to send to the County Planning Department. J. Angelone seconded the motion and all members were in favor of sending a letter in support of the Higgins Phase 1 acquisition.

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The FOSPC has generated a letter of support. The NJCF is seeking letters in support from other entities. The letter should be addressed to the County Planning Department. T. Robbi made a motion for the Environmental Commission to prepare a letter in support of this acquisition to send to the County Planning Department. The letter has to be in by the middle of November. J. Angelone seconded the motion and all members were in favor of sending a letter in support of the acquisition.

e. Site Review Committee – M. Prendamano presented an application for the DeGoia property on the north side of Back Brook. This Commission has done a site review on the property wherein M. Andrews suggested leaving our recommendations as they stand. The application is for a variance for a setback to add a porch. J. Angelone noted that the setback moves the house further away from Back Brook which is better from an environmental standpoint. T. Robbi suggested reiterating our recommendations to improve the riparian buffer by planting small trees. J. Angelone stated that it is a great opportunity to remind the homeowner that the land is a conservation easement and comes with certain responsibilities. F. Lippencott noticed a grove of trees on the property. T. Robbi suggested reminding the homeowner of the easement. T. Robbi made a motion that the Commission reiterates the recommendations made in the initial report. D. Kellogg noted that the property should be put on a list for future inspections. F. Lippencott inquired whether the Commission could suggest or mandate. D. Schleifer replied that we can no mandate. T. Robbi added that the Zoning Board will be meeting on the 10th of November for anyone that wants to attend the meeting. T. Robbi made a motion to resend the report and to let them know that the change does not imply further environmental degradation but to note that we requested a condition to improve the riparian buffer and to abide by the agreement within the existing easement on the property. The environmental will periodically inspect your easement to ensure compliance. D. Kellogg seconded the motion and all members voted unanimously in favor of the recommendation.

f. Public Outreach – D. Kellogg reported that currently working with Raritan Headwaters to do residential well sampling. The collection date is Wednesday, November 11, 2015. M. Prendamano sent flyers home with the school children while D. Kellogg put the information in the VIP.

D. Kellogg skipped to ‘New Business’ since it has to do with the well water testing. She reported that Raritan Headwaters has seen a lot of activity in West Amwell and Delaware Township due to a publication by Professor Onstott from Princeton University which explains his concerns with the pipeline going through a geologic area with heavy arsenic in it. The methane which is an off gas of the pipeline will add oxygen to the water which in turn will increase the arsenic levels in the water. The kits must be purchased at the municipal building and returned on the pick-up day between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m.

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g. Conservation Easements – D. Schleifer printed out the protocols for J. Frederick with the NJ Conservation Restriction and the NJ Preservation Restriction Act. He offered a copy to F. Lippencott for her review. They will discuss the protocols and formalize them and coordinate on creating a form letter for inspections.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Penn East Pipeline: E. Johanson was not present. F. Lippencott did read an article about a copyright law that prohibited the use of the land for a pipeline if it is copyrighted environmental art. J. Angelone read a few articles about that as well. A professional artist used that land in a piece of artwork that held a copyright. There is one section of the law that grants moral rights to an artist. It applies to artwork created on barns or buildings as well.

NEW BUSINESS:

Statewide Water Supply Plan – D. Schleifer talked about the Statewide Water Supply Plan. There was a letter from ANJEC about this issue. The Township Committee is going to consider it at their next meeting. There should be a new Water Supply Plan every five years. There hasn't been a new one since 1996. There is a new one but it has not been released. ANJEC is encouraging municipalities to encourage the prompt release of the Water Supply Plan. The Township Committee is seeking the Environmental Commission's recommendation to create a resolution in favor of asking for the prompt release of this plan by the DEP. T. Robbi made a motion to recommend that the Township Committee prepare a resolution in favor of the prompt release of the Statewide Water Supply Plan by the DEP. D. Sageser seconded the motion and all members were in favor of recommending this to the Township Committee.

Grant Opportunity – T. Robbi reported that there is a grant opportunity for a trail project. There are a couple of ideas. D & R Greenway came across a grant for bird habitat. The thought was we could implement our trail project to make a parking area in Cider Mill. That will be revisited with ANJEC next year. The new project would be in Rambling Pines Campground. There are three tributaries that come together across Stoneybrook Road. There are trails on both sides of Stoneybrook. They are considering whether or not it is feasible to put a trail there. The state has to approve this trail. There is a memorandum of agreement in the State government. He just wanted to let the Commission know of the potential for the trail and the reapplication of the ANJEC grant for Cider Mill Preserve.

CORRESPONDENCE: D. Schleifer wanted to share an invitation to the Raritan Headwaters State of the Watershed Conference on November 7th at the Oldwick Firehouse. All correspondence was listed on the 10/26/15 agenda.

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OPEN TO COMMISSION MEMBERS: D. Schleifer took an opportunity to discuss a Community Deer Hunting Opportunity. T. Robbi reported that the issue came up at a Township Committee meeting as to who can hunt on preserved land. He stated that D & R invites known hunting clubs to come in and hunt on preserved properties. There are certain regulations for these hunters such as they have to harvest a certain number of does. D. Kellogg noted that Hunterdon Land Trust has a program with sharp shooters. T. Robbi felt in East Amwell that probably wouldn't be appropriate. D. Sageser understood that certain priority would be given to East Amwell residents seeking to hunt on preserved lands. D. Kellogg added that Hunterdon Land Trust deals with hunt clubs and not individuals.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

ADJOURN: 9:39 PM. Motion for adjournment was received from D. Kellogg and J. Angelone 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		