

Pennington Borough Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes, April 17, 2003, 7:30 pm
Zoom Virtual

Attendees: Joann Held (Acting Chair), Nancy Fishman, Dan Rubenstein, John Valenza, Jim Fuger, Kieran John, Andy Jackson (Notetaker).

1. Public comment

There were no comments from the public.

2. Review of past minutes - March 28, 2023

Motion to approve by Dan Rubenstein, second by Jim Fuger. All in favor.

3. Administrative Items

- a) ANJEC Grant. The grant application for \$1500 to support development of an enclosure for native plants in the Pennington Arboretum was submitted on time. Joann will email a copy of the application to the Commission members. Appreciation was expressed to Betty and Mona in the Borough office for their help, and to Mike Van Clef for his report.

4. Borough Council Report (John Valenza). John reported that he was unable to secure additional funding for the Environmental Commission. He had mentioned to the Council that the Commission would have a booth at Pennington Day.

5. Planning/Zoning Board Report (Andy Jackson)

- a) The Board approved the subdivision of Block 3, Lot 2.01 at 51 Eglantine Avenue to give a separate undersized lot, Lot 2.02 for the common driveway used by 51 and 53. The small lot will become the property of 53, which currently has no road access except through Lot 2.01. A use variance for a driveway on new lot 2.02 was approved. The request was made by Jay Neary, the owner of both lots. He would like his estate not to be burdened with 53 Eglantine Ave as a land-locked property.
- b) Andy reported that Council had reviewed the Master Plan Reexamination report. The only comment was to ensure the Affordable Housing section was consistent with the plan presented by Planner Jim Kyle to the Council. The Council was supportive of the development of a new Master Plan by 2025. The planning Board approved the Report for presentation to the public at an open Board meeting on May 10 at Borough Hall. If no concerns are expressed, the Board will adopt the Report at the May 10 meeting. It will then be submitted to the State and County, fulfilling the obligation to submit a Reexamination Report to the State by September 2023.
- c) After the Report is adopted and submitted, attention can turn to developing the elements required for the new Plan. Three reside with the Environmental Commission; Conservation (which will mostly be the ERI), Recycling, and Green Buildings and Sustainability (GBESE). Jim Fuger is taking the lead on the GBESE.

Dan Rubenstein said he thought environmental interns from Princeton may be willing to work on these elements in the summer of 2024.

6. Pennington Day Planning (May 20)
 - a) Joann presented a draft for a banner. Some suggestions were made and noted. Cost was \$84. Members will share the cost if the Borough is not able to fund.
 - b) All meeting attendees said they would be available to work the booth for part of the time. Joann will send out a draft schedule.
 - c) Pennington Arboretum (Jim Fuger). Will have signup sheets for the work to be done on invasive species and the enclosure. Students looking to perform community service may be interested. Dan suggested having a map of the Arboretum showing the location of the enclosure and where work needs to be done. Will also have a copy of Mike Van Clef's report on the table.
 - d) Organic Waste (Dan Rubenstein). Encourage composting. Dan will look into whether MCIA gives away composting bins and will have info on where they can be purchased if not available from MCIA.
 - e) ERI (Andy Jackson). Explain what it is and why we have one. Executive Summary. Sample copy – Joann will try to complete the last item she is responsible for. Maps may be a good exhibit.
 - f) Carbon Footprint (Kieran John). Kieran has reserved the ANJEC game wheel and will pick it up. He will buy candy as prizes for kids. Joann will look into her collection of giveaways for prizes for adults.
 - g) Nancy Fishman thought we needed talking points on the status of the one-year-old paper and plastic bag ban, in case questions are asked.
7. Open Space Report (Nancy Fishman). Sked Street improvements are planned. Borough Council will hold a residents meeting on April 25th at 7:00pm via ZOOM to present the proposed improvements. The Arboretum was already discussed. There is land available for purchase as open space near Pennington but things are moving slowly. Andy Jackson suggested the Open Space Committee should look into purchasing the three open acres behind the HVRSD Administration building at 231 South Main Street. The purchase of the Arboretum could act as a model. Nancy will bring it up at the next meeting.
8. Carbon Neutral Workgroup (Brian Friedlich). Brian was not available. The group had met on March 30 at 12 noon. John discussed the planting of trees in open space close to the Borough as a carbon offset. Joann expressed her concern that the Borough had recently bought three gasoline engine vehicles – two police and one utility. John said EV or hybrid vehicles were not available and these replacements were needed quickly. Joann thought there should be a plan for such purchases to ensure that our carbon footprint is addressed. There was a discussion on where and how we could install commercial solar, and also whether a geothermal heat pump could be installed in Borough Hall. Dan said that Princeton University was installing geothermal energy gathering points across campus and may be able to help the Borough with a feasibility analysis. Next meeting of the Workgroup will be at noon on April 27.

9. Green Team and Sustainable Jersey Update (Joann Held)
 - a) Establishing Connections with our Municipalities. Joann has spoken to Hopewell Township about the Green Team and will speak to Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough when meetings can be arranged. She also suggested a meet-and-greet with other related organizations, such as FoHVOS, Delaware Greenway, Sourlands Conservancy and the like. The Watersheds could host such a meeting.
 - b) It was noted that Pennington Farmers Market Opening Day is May 27. There will be a recycling event for a number of items not accepted by MCIA.
10. Ongoing Business
 - a) ERI Update/Mapping (Kit Chandler). No report – Kit was not present at the meeting. Joann will write her section in the next few days to complete the ERI.
 - b) Landfill Property Update (Kit Chandler). No report.
 - c) Arboretum (Joann Held). Already discussed.
 - d) Pennington School Erosion Control Project (Brian Friedlich). No report – Brian was not present at the meeting.
11. Future Issues. This list was put together by Joann as placeholders.
 - a) MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Permit: training, public outreach, funding. Should we schedule this for the Environmental Commission?
 - b) Deer Management. Dan will report on this at a future meeting.
 - c) Developing a Vision Statement for the Environmental Commission. Perhaps an opportunity to address in the summer when things are quiet.
 - d) Inviting teens to join the Environmental Commission as Junior Members. Should be easy to do for online meetings.

12. Next Meeting – May 15, 7:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Notes submitted by Andy Jackson.