

CORRECTED

February 18, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Roosevelt was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:30 P.M at the Borough Hall. The Roll was called by
Chairperson Eitan Grunwald.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Bonna, Esakoff, Grunwald, Lowrie, Ticktin Tulloss

Absent: Oatis, Van Salisbury-Alt 1, McBride-Alt 2

Chairperson Grunwald stated: "Let the minutes show that adequate notice of this meeting as required by Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 of the Open Public Meetings Law has been provided by posting notice on the public bulletin board at the Roosevelt Post Office and Borough Hall. A copy of this notice was e-mailed to the Asbury Park Press and the Times [Trenton] for publication and filed with the Borough Clerk on January 26, 2015."

PUBLIC:

Dr. Hartman and Mr. Johnny Quispe of Rutgers and Mr. Bob Clark, Roosevelt resident, were present.

PRESENTATION:

Dr. Hartman came to speak to this Commission about the Environmental Resources Inventory that she and her Rutgers students have been working on for Roosevelt. She had hoped to use a projector, but there was a problem with it, so she explained their **observations and recommendations** of the information gathered. She began by complimenting Roosevelt for making impressive strides in securing agricultural land for the future. She appreciated the comments she received, Johnny helped with the details. She will research further with her colleagues on some of the comments and then address them. She feels the most important and most usable part of the report are the recommendations at the end. Mr. Isaac Menda suggested that she separate the observations into a cover letter which she felt was a good idea, so the general observations and recommendations will be separated. Dr. Hartman passed out a sheet called Observations and Recommendations which she then discussed with this Commission.

She was impressed with the detailed record of the **animals and biota** [flora and fauna of a region] of Roosevelt that is maintained on line. She suggested that Roosevelt might be able to get a small grant from ANJEC or other DEP programs to help create more updated information in the future, work with a GPS, so that historical records of plants and animals can be searched.

Our **forests** have changed significantly since the last study. There is enormous growth of many **invasive species**. Roosevelt critically needs a forest management plan. Full removal of

these invasive species is unlikely, but a management strategy can be implemented for removal of small patches to slow down spreading. Dr. Hartman noted some of the forests are County Parks, some private, so the boundaries are difficult to identify. Chair Grunwald added that some forests are also owned by the State, the County and also by towns. There is **dumping** at the edges of the forests. Mr. Louis Esakoff explained that there is no leaf removal in Roosevelt, so leaves are dumped behind properties. Also the **deer** have nowhere to go, so they eat the young tree and plant growth. Invasive plants are all over New Jersey. There is a New Jersey Invasive Strike Team that gives training and guidance which can help Roosevelt. Dr. Hartman suggested that Roosevelt develop a management plan which begins with notifying the owners about treating this invasive problem, developing composting, perhaps picking up leaves, etc. She has concerns that in a real drought year, the amount of compost put in at the edges and the density of the Japanese stilt grass development which looks like lawns, a fire might start. Increase the alert that a small **fire** can get out of control very quickly. She said that the State Forestry Division is in discussion about developing policies about forest management. New Jersey is behind with this, as many states deal with logging, which is different. Ms. Diane Lowrie noted that an interagency model can be checked out with the State. Members will follow up. It was noted that the wetlands greatly impact the forests.

Roosevelt has significant **erosion** in the upper stretches of **Empty Box Brook**. Dr. Hartman said they found no evidence this was caused by a beaver dam, but rather that sediments collect and a substantial increase of storm-water input is coming from **Millstone Township**. She suggests that Roosevelt develop a partnership with Millstone to stabilize the rate of flow. Mr. Michael Ticktin mentioned that Roosevelt just got Notice that Millstone had approved a wetlands delineation in 2012 and now wants to build. Of note the NJDEP has new information and has a new way of evaluating habitat potential for a number of endangered species like the Wood Turtle. That habitat overlaps with the potential building site. Both towns need to work together as they border and the stream will be impacted. Our Mayor has sent a letter of our concerns of storm water impact on the headwaters. Board concern is that some yards are getting wetter. Dr. Hartman's hypothesis is that Millstone land use change at the top of the tributaries has impact. Some of the Millstone houses have big lawns; runoff is from the highly developed areas, comes off at a rate of 75-90 percent of siltation coming down toward Roosevelt. A solution may be to seek a joint grant with Millstone for stream restoration (Empty Box Brook) that could address the erosion, sedimentation, invasive species dominance, through stabilizing the run off rate. Ms. Mary Tulloss explained that a group from the Environmental Commission and others worked on this and the DEP would **not** allow us to remove the silt. Comment was that it is late to turn the clock back, but we can try to prevent the situation getting worse. Millstone is not trying to build in the wetland area; an applicant from Millstone is applying to have the buffer area made smaller and have the buildings closer to the edge of the wetlands. The committee has submitted a letter and we hope to receive a response from DEP.

Mr. Ticktin checked Empty Box Brook at the sewer plant; it is not flowing now, might be blocked. The water is higher now, trees being destroyed. This is near Assunpink Ms. Tulloss commented that some yards are getting wetter. Chair Grunwald asked if this situation was natural or unnatural. Dr. Hartman said the beaver population is native to this area and has increased because of no predators. Our concern is the health of the stream and invasive species. Roosevelt needs a management plan and Assunpink has a **beaver plan** that we should check. Ms. Lowrie said there is a new manager in Assunpink. Note that this community has gone from a primarily open landscape to a primarily forested landscape. This changes things like the way the water table fluctuates. Dr. Hartman said that most of the houses of the original plan are not

affected. Mr. Esakoff said some of the newer houses on Farm Lane are affected. There are no simple answers.

Dr. Hartman said she could find no map of the **storm water drainage system** for Roosevelt. This should be developed, but will cost the town. It is to Roosevelt's advantage to have this information recorded and any changes updated as part of an ongoing stewardship effort. Many have flooding in basements and sump pumps because of problems. The Roosevelt Public School has drainage problems also.

Dr. Hartman stated that **stream monitoring** would be valuable if set up to be both repeatable and at regular intervals. Photos could be taken for a record of how it was and how it is later on.

Dr. Hartman felt that Roosevelt tries to do a good job as stewards. The community should use some of the more modern tools to keep up with the times.

Chairperson Eitan Grunwald said that there is a 30-day time for our comments to the Millstone application. Dr. Hartman will draft some language and Chair Grunwald will draft a letter and send it. Motion to transmit Dr. Hartman's findings to the DEP and to Millstone Township regarding their application was made by Mr. Ticktin and seconded by Mr. Esakoff. The Board approved this motion unanimously.

Dr. Hartman commented that she received about 120 comments referring to the ERI draft, which she will address and fine tune. Copies will go to the Council and Planning Board. The Public will be invited when the Environmental Resources Inventory is completed. Dr. Hartman will give us a second Draft and share responses submitted for discussion. Then the Final ERI will be submitted for approval and made available to the Public.

OTHER:

JCP&L Herbicides - This power company is using herbicides under their lines because the Federal mandate recommends that vegetation must be kept below a certain level. We are concerned and can comment.

Budget - Mr. Lou Esakoff checked our 2014 budget and we spent \$683 out of \$3,000. He will itemize this for the next meeting. Request has been made to the Council for the 2015 budget to also be \$3,000.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mr. Michael Ticktin and second by Mr. Louis Esakoff that the Reorganization minutes of January 21, 2015 be accepted. It was suggested that all corrections be made at the meeting. Minutes were accepted with minor corrections: p. 2, typos and p. 4 under Monarch butterflies, change milk pods to *milkweed*.

ADJOURNMENT:

No further business, on motion by Ms. Stacey Bonna and second by Mr. Michael Ticktin this meeting was adjourned.

Attest:

Ann M. Kassahun, Secretary