

June 17, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Roosevelt was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 7:30 P.M at the Borough Hall. The Roll was called by Chairperson Eitan Grunwald.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Bonna, Grunwald, Janowitz, Lowrie, Oatis, Tickin, Tulloss

Absent: 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:

Chairperson Eitan Grunwald welcomed the ten local residents present which included Ralph & Nancy Warnick and Messrs. Robert Francis and Rod Tulloss, etc.

PRESENTATION:

Chair Grunwald also welcomed and introduced Dr. Jean Marie Hartman of Rutgers University who came with her students this year to review Roosevelt’s environmental changes since the last Inventory was done some years ago. This evening she will review their Observations and Recommendations. A hard copy of this Report will be in the Borough Hall for review; it is also available online for downloading and the website for that is in an article in the June Borough Bulletin. There will be no action taken tonight. This information on their findings will be prioritized later for actions that we can take. These Observations and Recommendations will be sent to the Planning Board and also integrated with the Master Plan, and will be sent to the Borough Council and Planner.

Dr. Hartman discussed our forests, noting that invasive plant species are rising, trees are down from storms, and there is trash and plant debris. She stressed that we need a management strategy and need to consider fire hazards. She mentioned there are websites to help communities with these kinds of problems. Also she went into detail about invasive species and informed us that there is a New Jersey Invasive Strike Team to give us guidance.

Dr. Hartman noted that the streams in Roosevelt and surrounding townships are classified Category 1 streams and are supposed to have a 300 foot buffer around them for any kind of development. Checking Empty Box Brook, they noted that there is a lot of sediment coming in from the head-waters area in Millstone. One of the problems is that the building that has been going on in Millstone Township over the last thirty years has changed the way water is draining

and has changed the vegetation at the headwaters. Then the beavers came in. Beavers have gone from being endangered to becoming pests throughout the United States. Fortunately, there are Fish & Wildlife folks who can aid with beaver management. The sediment will take a long time to adjust. They saw a lot of places where the banks are being undercut, difficult to restore; however, with these being Category 1 streams, a restoration effort might be implemented. She feels there needs to be a water shed effort; we should check stream restoration grants that could address erosion, sedimentation, invasive species which are characteristic of the eastern portion of Empty Box Brook. The Raritan Headwater Association could be contacted. She mentioned a link between the storm water and the stream. Mostly the storm water is collected in pipes and emptied into the streams. Note that if you make changes like curbing, sidewalks for the streets [Rochdale Avenue], that will increase storm water going into the streams.

Regarding our trees, Dr. Hartman said some trees age out at 200 years, many age closer to 75 years, so Roosevelt is approaching this lower figure. There was resident/member participation about the deer eating the seedlings which will mean fewer new trees. We might have to put cages around new trees, not pretty but practical. It was noted that our forest was complex, had oak, birch, beech, and hickory. There was discussion how with the loss of trees, we have lost flying squirrels and woodpeckers. Our deer are also eating our native plants, not the invasive ones; so with invasive species being very aggressive and producing a lots of seeds, it is a battle indeed to save native plants. It was agreed that we must reach out to our community for help. An article on invasive species in the Borough Bulletin would be very helpful. It was noted that there needs to be a town map of where the storm drains and pipes are. Chairperson Grunwald said that this Commission will look at all this material, using it to see what we can do. He felt the Commission must reach out to our community. Dr. Hartman said to email her and she will do what she can to find information for us, because she loves Roosevelt. Chair Grunwald thanked Dr. Hartman for her Report. We are very grateful for this new Environmental Resource Inventory.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by Mr. Michael Ticktin and second by Ms. Mary Tulloss to approve the minutes of May 20, 2015. The minutes were accepted unanimously with correction to page 19 under Monarch Butterflies/Milkweed, line 2, "Management Area in Roosevelt" changed to read just "Management Area" omitting location. Chair Grunwald and Ms. Oatis abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Invoice (Bill) – A.G. Farm – Bee Farm at Roosevelt Public School for Earth Day \$150
(in our budget to be paid, see details under Roosevelt Public School)

REPORT OF PLANNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

Mr. Michael Ticktin reported that the Planning Board did not meet.

REPORT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:

Mr. Michael Ticktin reported that the Council is working on plans for a new Emergency Services Building 75 feet behind the existing fire house building which is too small and in very poor shape to meet our needs. This larger building is to house our new larger fire engines and our ambulances, etc. These larger vehicles must be able to turn around. There is no alternative site for this project. We will need a DEP wetland permit and many details must be worked out. There is concern about the possibility of brush and forest fires and our being able to handle them. The building cost is from \$575,000 to \$600,000. Residents worry about footing this bill. Close neighbors are concerned about the location of an imposing building behind them. Mr. Ralph Warnick, 4 Homestead Lane, who will be very close to this construction, was concerned about the many trees to be taken down, new paving, and water. Ms. Nancy Warnick felt the new construction is very “ambitious” for Roosevelt and felt the Environmental Commission and the Planning Board should have seen the plans. The Environmental Commission members were invited to attend Planning Board meetings to ask questions, etc.

PUBLIC: See resident comments under Report of Council Representative above

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Roosevelt Public School - Explanation for the bill from A.G. Farm was that they came and brought their bee hive to our local school for Earth Day activities. This Commission has a yearly budget and allotted our school \$200, namely \$150 for the bees and \$50 for the end of year award given in remembrance of our deceased former Environmental Commission Chairman, James Carnevale, to a student who excelled in an environmental endeavor (Anthony Orlando)--these two totaling the \$200. Motion was made by Ms. Diane Lowrie and second by Mr. Michael Ticktin that a check be sent to A.G. Farm; this was agreed upon unanimously by the members and the Borough office will be notified. The award check was prepared on time for the Graduation Ceremony. Also, the third grade teacher will tend the herb garden at the school during the summer, but needs volunteers to help for three weeks. Several members of this Commission [Lowrie, Tulloss, Grunwald, Ticktin] will help with the garden. This Commission is very supportive of our local school.

ADJOURNMENT:

No further business, on motion by Mr. Michael Ticktin and second by Ms. Mary Tulloss, this meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Attest:

Ann M. Kassahun, Secretary