

PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, October 12, 2011; 7:30 PM  
Pequannock Town Hall  
Second Floor Conference Room

Minutes

- A) Call to Order 7:35pm
- B) Roll Call
  - 1) Members (Present/Absent):
    - a) Chair: Tom Newman *present*
    - b) Secretary: Tom Andrea *present*
    - c) Open Space Liaison: Rudy Steinthal *absent*
    - d) Planning Board Liaison: Philip Dickenson *present*
    - e) Lisa Martinus *present*
    - f) Jeff Mauriello *8:20*
    - g) Nancy Towner *present*
    - h) Alternate Members #1: Christopher Lotito *present, out 8:16*
    - i) Alternate Members #2: Ron Baran *7:45*
    - j) Council Liaison: Melissa Florance-Lynch *present*
- C) Public Comments (list those in attendance)
  - 1) *Louise Marchese*
  - 2) *Ruthanne Hughes*
- D) Special Presentations
- E) Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 14, 2011 – *Tom N moved to approve, Phil seconds*
- F) Correspondence ( M – Mail, E – Email)
  - 1) M2011-025 (tabled from 9/2012)
    - a) From – New Jersey Highlands Coalition
    - b) Date – August 9,2011
    - c) Subject – Membership in NJ Highlands Coalition
    - d) Action – Consider Membership, *Tom A votes yes for Voting Membership.*
    - e) Details – Costs – Voting Member \$30 and Non-Voting Member \$20. *Decided to have Nancy review pros and cons of joining this organization. Looks more like a contribution to support this organization.*
  - 2) M2011-026
    - a) From – Township of Pequannock Planning Board
    - b) Date – 9/16/2011

- c) Subject – Hearle Village Improvements
  - d) Action – Comments sought
  - e) Details – Large package of plans
  - f) Response: *The Environmental Commission has no issue with the small variance required for setback. Although the planned impervious cover is just within the 50% limit, it is very close to the limit and the Environmental Commission requests that the owner consider using pervious pavers for the parking and drive areas. The Environmental Commission also notes that with the removal of the residential properties there will be a loss of trees and other vegetation, though the actual extent is not specifically noted on the plans. The Commission requests that the proposed landscaping include the net change in tree/shrub cover that is proposed, that this change involve more rather than less tree/shrub cover, and that where possible, existing, mature, native tree species be retained.*
- 3) M2011-027
- a) From – Pequannock Township Parks and Recreation Dept.
  - b) Date – 9/22/2011
  - c) Subject – Ho-Down Fees
  - d) Action – FYI
  - e) Details – The fee for non-profits like us will be \$20 next year
  - f) Response: *it is silly for one Township Department /Commission assess a fee from another Township Department /Commission.*
- 4) M2011-028
- a) From – Pequannock River Coalition
  - b) Date – October 2011
  - c) Subject – Newsletter
  - d) Action – FYI
  - e) Details – Volume 16, Issue 5, published bi-monthly
- 5) M2011-029
- a) From – ANJEC
  - b) Date – 10/2011
  - c) Subject – Two popular resource papers
  - d) Action – FYI
  - e) Details – Stormwater Management and Open Space Plan papers
- 6) M2011-030
- a) From – Township Ranger
  - b) Date – 6/2011 - 10/2011
  - c) Subject – Ranger Reports
  - d) Action – FYI
  - e) Details – Township Ranger activities

- G) Budget Report (Tom A.) \$470
- H) Chairperson's Report (Tom N.)

- 1) *On Saturday, September 10, the EC coordinated with the MCMUA, Dave Hollberg, and the Township's Fire Inspector to assist in a special, flood-related Hazardous Household Waste Collection Day. Between 9:30am and 2:30pm, we drove through the flood-impacted areas with one of the Township's pickup trucks and loaded from curbside hazardous materials and items, which we then drove to MCMUA's collection operation at Town Hall for proper disposal. As we worked our way through town, we spoke to many residents to explain what we were doing and to offer them some encouragement during that difficult time as they tried to piece their lives back together. Over the course of the day, we transported to the collection center three **very** full truckloads of items and materials, such as cans of kerosene and other petroleum products, pesticides, pool chemicals, fluorescent lights, TVs and electronics. In this way we were able to reduce the risk of fire or injury to our residents and reduce the risk of contamination of our neighborhoods that spills of these materials could have caused. By properly disposing of these materials, we also reduced the risk of polluting landfills as we reduced the need for new raw materials by allowing these materials to be recycled..*
- 2) *Ho Down wrap-up: the Ho-Down on September 17 was a success! We had a game along the "Proper Disposal" theme that was well-received among residents. Although traffic by our booth was less than in previous years (we normally give away 300 items, this time we gave away barely more than 100), we did have 78 raffle entrants for the two recycling bins. The two winners, Linda Porpora and Rich Valle, both from the township, were very excited and participated in our award ceremony. I have drafted a piece for the Suburban Trends with photos of the winners and some text about the Ho-Down theme we had.*
- 3) *Responded to a question about dam operation and impact on floods:*
  - a) *During Irene, water level at Pompton Lake lowered 3 ft according to some accounts; reportedly had a minor impact. The volume of water released is apparent from the USGS flow records; not apparent what impact was but clearly the impact was in the right direction (made room for more flood water). Question is: could the level be lowered more than 3 ft? Melissa said there is a system in place to follow the results of a study, per a meeting of mayors of 6 towns.*
  - b) *Could other dams be opened as well? If all dams could be lowered a significant amount, would this have an impact? Other dams control reservoirs – water is a commodity.*

- c) *Has there been a study about this or is everyone guessing? Yes and there is a new study coming out – Rich thinks the results will be more positive about control options.*
- 4) *On September 23, I responded to resident’s questions about the “natural state” of the previously residential areas in the floodway that are being returned via the Green Acres program.*
- a) *Question of planting cat tails or other plants to increase flood storage capacity. Responded that planting does not increase flood storage capacity and in fact could make flooding worse here and upstream by slowing down the flow.*
- b) *Planting desirable native species could help provide a varied ecosystem (by giving these plants a fighting chance against invasive species), and could help retard erosion and could help provide a water-quality benefit. Not sure on State regulations for planting in the floodway.*
- 5) *NY/NJ Trail Map updates on September 28 at (<http://www.nynjtc.org/product/jersey-highlands-central-north-region-trail-map>) – Tom A please add this link to our website.*
- 6) *Flood follow-up:*
- a) *The flooding deposited a lot of material throughout the floodway. The township has done a remarkable job in cleaning up, but I can’t help but wonder how much litter and other debris is scattered throughout the floodway, and to what extent the flood waters have eroded our stream banks and filled in our ditches and drains. I think the EC will have our hands full this winter with inspections. Also noticed a lot of flood-related debris – the waterways in town were infused with material and may need to be cleaned up. Question is what areas are priority areas? Christopher suggested a staging area. Scouts pack 144 are cleaning on Nov 19<sup>th</sup> – that may be a good weekend. Come to next meeting prepared to say if we’ll participate*
- b) *I have noticed that many homes have been forced to pump their basements. It seems to me that this situation has worsened over the past 3-5 years beyond anything I remember since 1993 when I moved to town. This indicates to me that our water table levels in town have increased significantly. While this may simply be the result of more rainfall, it could also indicate that a drainage problem has developed. Does the township monitor groundwater (water table) elevations anywhere? (Probably a question for Dave H or Dave Battaglia). I’m thinking that it might be useful for the EC to conduct a “windshield survey” of which houses are pumping – from this we could develop a map that would show us the areal extent of the problem. Not sure if*

*there is anything to do about it, but water in basements can lead to all sorts of health problems as well as structural issues.*

- 7) *Tour of Township water utilities – I will want to pursue this with Dave Battaglia*
- 8) *Rain Barrel donated at Fire Co #1 – not used, Tom N to retrieve.*
- 9) *I heard from someone who said they heard a radio report about a chromium contamination in town and a cancer cluster possibly related to it. I researched it and found nothing. High School – during construction found Benzo-Pyrene. Construction is now back on track.*

**I) Town Council Liaison Report (Melissa)**

- 1) *Flood committee meeting this Thursday night.*
- 2) *FEMA registrations have been lower than expected.*
- 3) *Newbridge is looking for volunteers to help canvass prior to Oct 31 – meeting Saturday at 4pm.*
- 4) *Halloween Parade Sunday October 30, PV school, 4pm, movie afterwards.*
- 5) *Green Team waiting to hear about grant application – Nov 15 is date when hear about results of application*
- 6) *October 14 is end of Township’s special flood / building material pickup.*
- 7) *Township is going to start enforcement of recycling – violations will have tag warnings initially, then service interruptions.*
- 8) *17 Homes will be elevated for flood purposes.*
- 9) *Homeowners meeting next Thursday for acquisition of homes.*

**J) Planning Board Liaison Report (Philip)**

- 1) *Workshop meeting was held – information to Open Space Master Plan was presented, supplement will be a few months away.*
- 2) *Build a house on foundation of garage off of the Boulevard*
- 3) *Hearle Village*

**K) Open Space Liaison Report (Tom A)**

- 1) *Getting \$5.5M for property buyouts (22 properties); applied to Morris County for 6 additional homes; North Pequannock ave last home will close next month; 1 side of Harrison is almost all bought out – expect to finish them off maybe next year; Riverwalk is shaping up but still have issue with easements with commercial properties.*

**L) Business**

- 1) **Ditch/Flood Gate inspections -**
  - a) **Need to start inspections after next meeting.**
- 2) **Mayor’s River Clean Up: 3/31/2012 between 9am and 1pm (Rudy) –**
- 3) **PV Park water quality/clarity – new commission started up, headed by Tom A “PV Park Committee” will work to make recommendations on how to improve PV park water quality, facilities, etc. First Wednesday of the month at the Senior House at 7:00.**

- 4) Walkable Communities Workshop Program
  - a) A meeting is being sought by the Mayor with interested parties to discuss implementation of ideas in the report. Interested parties are the Mayor, Dave Hollberg, Joe Wells, DPW, Police and Tom Andrea. Still needs to be scheduled.

5) Grants

6) Septic Tanks/Sewers

- a) Educate town about maintenance and look at other towns ordinances on septic tank maintenance. *EC distributed info on maintenance at the Ho Down.*
- b) Model Ordinances, *Tom A emailed an ANJEC one.*

7) Ordinances or Resolutions -

- 8) Household Hazardous Waste Pick-up – Tom N to check with Tom Burbridge of MCMUA about spring 2012.

M) Action Items:

All:

- 1) Stream inspections.
- 2) Website: *Compile list of websites and internet links to include. Give Tom A more information. Provide/add issues/information about underground tanks on our website. Add NY/NJ Trail Commission site.*
  - a) Green demolitions
  - b) Home Depot – mini dumpster – bag – put on our website!
- 3) Spring coordination with Green Team: Street Fair? Earth Day?

Tom Newman:

- 1) Review stream-inspection reports completed since last submittal. When complete, submit the new reports to Council. Ongoing – working toward summer completion/presentation to Planning Board. Tom N to writeup Roosevelt / Lyman area.
- 2) Schedule a meeting with Planning Board on ERI update – first /last week of month – check Pequannock calendar. Speak to Jill Hartman to schedule. *Tom N has not completed the writeups from last year's inspections. New inspections will be starting soon. Idea is to do a quick stream inspection following the stream cleanups in November.*
- 3) Scan and email the copy of the Right of Way / paved road dimensions for each street that Phil distributed at the July meeting. Will do.

Melissa Florance-Lynch:

Thomas Andrea:

- 1) Do stream report for Glens area walked with Tom Newman:  
[http://www.everytrail.com/view\\_trip.php?trip\\_id=470637](http://www.everytrail.com/view_trip.php?trip_id=470637) .
- 2) Edit the Mountainside Hike video for broadcast. *Done, files are too big to put on township website and not supported. Ron suggested putting these on YouTube.*
- 3) Find suitable gift for NBS since they gave us a donation. Tom Newman to send a thank you note.
- 4) Add (<http://www.nynjtc.org/product/jersey-highlands-central-north-region-trail-map>) to our website.

Lisa Martinus:

- 1) Sustainable NJ – meeting next Wednesday.
  - a. Resolution Status
  - b. Desire a Township liaison at meetings
  - c. Melissa will attend next meeting
  - d. Inventory of fleet vehicles, record of gas expenditures, etc.

Rudy Steinthal: (Absent – no update available)

- 1) Continue Stream Inspections.
- 2) Follow up on the \$25 gift check from Hudson City Savings Bank.
- 3) Do Beaver Brook stream inspection with Jeff.
- 4) Blue line listing for checklist

Philip Dickinson:

Jeff Mauriello:

- 1) Accompany Rudy on stream investigation

Nancy Towner:

- 1) *Look into Environmental Commission becoming a member of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition. The cost of joining is \$30 for Voting Member and \$20 for Non-Voting Member. Nancy will review pros and cons of joining this organization.*

Ron Baran:

- 1) Keep track of municipal energy audit; Donnely (contractor).

N) General Calendar

*November 19, 2011 between 9am and 1pm: Mayor's Lyman Park Cleanup*  
*March 31, 2012, between 9am and 1pm: Mayor's River Cleanup.*

O) Adjournment 9:49pm

### Mission Statement

We represent the public and its long-term interests as local environmental advocates. We work towards these goals by: advising the town council and the planning and zoning boards about a wide range of environmental issues that affect the town; advocating for open-space preservation; keeping residents informed of environmental issues; promoting environmental education; and working with neighboring commissions and other organizations to meet these goals.