

DENNIS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes: April 16, 2014.

Regularly scheduled meeting held at 5:30 p.m. at Dennis Township Municipal Building.

Chairman Bob Penrose led the flag salute to open the meeting before opening the meeting and welcoming new commission member Cindy Leatherwood.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: George, Leatherwood, McManus, Penrose, Rebmann, Slotterback

ABSENT: Erwin, Hoff (both due to illness).

The committee voted to approve the minutes of the March 19 meeting and Mr. Rebmann indicated that he would contact the webmaster to have those minutes posted to the township website for public consumption.

Mr. Rebmann reported that there were no applications at the last Land Use Board meeting and no correspondence for the commission.

Mr. Rebmann reported that the ANJEC and Shade Tree Program applications approved by the commission at its last meeting had been forwarded to the CFO and were awaiting approval by township committee.

In response to a question from Ms. Leatherwood, Ms. George explained the functions of those organizations and the purposes of the commission in voting to join.

She then led a discussion of changes she designed for the front page of Natural Resources Inventory (township website). The commission voted to adopt the changes and will forward the modified copy to be included on the appropriate web page.

Under old business, Mr. Rebmann motioned and the commission agreed to postpone discussion of electronics recycling until next meeting, May 21. John Baron, Cape May County MUA Deputy Director has agreed to speak at that meeting. Mr. Penrose requested that Mr. Rebmann contact Mr. Baron about opening the presentation to allow for questions about other types of recycling besides electronics. Related to that topic, Ms. Leatherwood mentioned concerns that the local school might not be recycling.

After discussion among commission members about the matter, Mr. Penrose indicated he would contact Vernon Champion from township Public Works to secure his input on the matter and whether that department should contact the school.

Ms. Leatherwood will also explore the issue at the school and will report at the next meeting.

Mr. Rebmann will issue a web and press release announcing Mr. Baron's appearance at the May 21 meeting.

Next on the agenda was the outdoor wood boiler ordinance. The commission discussed the development of the ordinance, originally with the now defunct Natural Resources Committee) and reaffirmed the need for guidelines governing the devices.

Mr. McManus shared a discussion he'd had with the owner of an outdoor wood boiler. The man had purchased a manufactured unit (cost \$5,000) and with all the attending costs for installation, including permits (total cost \$8,000).

A neighbor complained about its operation on a number of occasions. Local officials played no role in responding to these complaints. A representative of NJDEP responded in each instant, inspected the unit and observed its operation, then concluded that it satisfactory. Until what turned out to be the official's last visit.

On that occasion, there were problems with smoke emissions, as a result of which a cease operating order was issued.

Rather than outlay additional funds to install improvements, the individual sold the boiler.

Mr. Rebmann pointed out that that situation underlined the need to establish local guidelines for property owners and local officials to use to work together to avoid unfortunate difficulties after the fact.

Mr. Penrose pointed out that a decision will have to be made concerning who will ultimately enforce the ordinance (code or construction official). He asked the commission how it wished to proceed.

Ms. George motioned to submit the ordinance as is to township committee to allow its members and counsel to review and act accordingly. The commission unanimously approved. Mr. Rebmann will forward a copy of the ordinance to Mr. DiCicco for possible introduction at a future township committee meeting.

Moving on to other business, Mr. Rebmann indicated that he had contacted Jo Ann Sopchak, horticulture teacher at Cape May County Technical School, about having her class assist with rehabilitating and maintaining the municipal natural habitat garden. Ms. Sopchak expressed an interest in participating but being that school is currently closed for spring break, Rebmann will contact her about arranging a meeting with the commission to discuss particulars.

Ms. Leatherwood informed the commission that the local school has a Core Club, involving students in grades 7-8 that might be interested in participating. She will contact teacher advisors for that club to ascertain if there is any interest. Mr. Rebmann suggested that the local students might be interested in helping with the garden at the township museum. The size and condition of the municipal garden might be better suited to the efforts of the older children.

Mr. McManus recalled that the museum also had a small herb garden and added that there is also a small box garden near the Dennisville Post Office.

Ms. George discussed the next item on the agenda, the shade tree commission, and advised that she'd be attending a free seminar on April 26 about tree health. Seminars such as this are required for the township to remain in compliance with the state Community Forestry Program.

She reiterated that the local forestry plan expires at the end of 2014

She distributed a number of documents including an application for a matching grant from the DEP. Ms. George will work on the grant but stressed that the commission can perform and apply a variety on "in-kind" services that could qualify for the township's "match" of the funds being requested.

Activities include volunteering at the municipal garden, litter pick-up, and tree planting, she explained. She will develop a spread sheet for members to use to record hours devoted to volunteer activities. This will be for the DEP and grant application.

Ms. George noted that Jackie Justice completed the grant application in 2008 and might still have a copy for reference purposes.

She also suggested that commission members familiarize themselves with the forestry plan and Mr. Penrose directed Mr. Rebmann to contact the Ms. Justice to get a few hard copies of that document for those members uncomfortable reading from a computer screen.

Mr. Rebmann indicated that the township museum has an old list of the township's significant trees and he will locate and distribute that list to the members for reference.

Mr. Penrose asked about liability on township property in the event of an accident involving a falling tree (or limb). Ms. George noted that compliance with the tree act will help mitigate any potential liability.

Ms. George also informed commission members that she was meeting with Ralph Cooper from Upper Township about networking with the Green Team. That group focuses on energy efficiency type issues. She will fill in commission members at the next meeting.

There being no public comment or further discussion among commission members, Mr. Penrose asked for motion to close the meeting which was seconded and passed.