

## DENNIS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes: November 18, 2014.

Regularly scheduled meeting held at 5:30 p.m. at Old School House Museum.

Chairman Bob Penrose led the flag salute to open the meeting. He then welcomed new commission member Chris Castor.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: All

ABSENT: None

The committee voted to approve the minutes of the October meeting and Mr. Rebmann will contact the webmaster to have those minutes posted to the township website for public consumption.

Mr. Rebmann asked for questions from the commission regarding the December 20 application before the Land Use Board, Pierson Mining. The application seeks approval of renewal of an existing mining permit. Mr. Rebmann asked commission members for questions he should ask as the commission's voting representative on the Land Use Board.

Member concerns include inspection procedures at the site, restoration plans for areas no longer being mined, signage and fencing and maintenance procedures of same. Members want inspections by either township or land use board engineers to determine if the applicant is complying with requirements regarding site restoration and signage/fencing.

Ms George suggested a floating "No swimming" sign at the site.

Related to commission involvement in Land Use Board applications, the commission agreed with Ms. George suggestion that the commission request digital copies of future applications so that members will have more time to individually review materials prior to commission meetings. Mr. Rebmann will pass along the request to the Land Use Board secretary.

Mr. McManus also raised a question about the mining operation on Route 83, noting that several "For Sale" signs are on display. He added that he had not seen any security guards on duty at the site.

Mr. DiCicco, attending as representative from Township Committee requested Mr. McManus to email him the information so he can forward it to the Township Engineer for follow-up inquiry.

Ms Leatherwood updated the commission on its new Facebook page. In addition to more than seventy (70) “Likes”, the site is now being followed by other environmental commissions and interested organizations.

She added that students from the local school have been submitting relevant photos for inclusion on the page. In response to her request made at October’s Commission meeting, several student members of Dennis Township Elementary School’s “Make a Difference” Club (grade 8) attended the commission’s November meeting.

Commission members also agreed to provide Ms. Leatherwood with photos and print matter for inclusion on the Facebook page. This would include suggested “links” to relevant sites (National Arbor Day Foundation, for example).

Ms. Leatherwood also indicated interest in adding a Twitter account as part of the commission’s desired wish to “reach out” to more social media technology oriented members of the community. Students are also developing “weblog pages” related to areas of interest. Other grades are involved in doing beach plum field work at the Hagen Road School, she told the commission.

In response to questions from Mr. Rebmann, Ms. Leatherwood explained how to access the technology and indicated that the activity will not cost the commission any money.

She also indicated that she will ask whether the Municipal Building is serviced by WiFi to allow Internet access during future commission meetings.

After her comments, Ms Leatherwood introduced the night’s guests, two 8<sup>th</sup> graders from the local school. Danielle and Olivia are officers of the “Make a Difference Club” (Danielle founded the club). The club’s mission is to demonstrate ways for students (and anyone else for that matter) to “give back to the community”.

“We want to get involved in some of your projects and help where we can,” she told the commission.

Some projects already undertaken by the club include, dune grass planting in Avalon, community litter pick-ups, and beach sweeps.

The club currently lists 17 members, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Mr. Penrose asked about expanding the idea to other schools. Ms Leatherwood mentioned a possible future garden clean-up at the Academy Road School, conducted jointly by the club and commission. Commission members were agreeable and will discuss the idea further at a near future meeting.

Mr. Rebmann asked about helping with seedling tree planting and interacting with Ms Leatherwood in her efforts to expand the commission’s communications capabilities.

Ms. George asked about including 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in the club so that an experienced group will be in place for the next school year. She also invited the club to visit her

family's farm in Ocean View to learn more about the beach plum planting ongoing at the farm.

The commission agreed to keep the club in mind for collaboration on any future projects it is planning.

Ms. Slotterback reported that she had located original plans for the municipal garden which she shared with commission members. She spoke in some detail about the layout of the garden and the original intent to present a number of "mini-gardens" each designed for a particular purpose such as butterfly habitat.

Ms. Slotterback explained in detail about monarch butterfly migration patterns, stressing the need to establish suitable habitat for nurturing cocoons.

She also shared a copy of a book she'd located (circa 1990) which listed all the significant trees in the county at the time. Mr. Rebmann will copy the pages relevant to Dennis Township for use in a future historical tree survey required under the Community Forest Plan which the commission is updating.

Mr. Penrose reported on the Shade Tree Federation training in Cherry Hill (he attended along with Ms. George and Vernon Champion, Assistant Public Works supervisor).

"They are not pushing indigenous trees as much as they advocate trees that are readily adaptable," he said. "They mention hackberry, bald cypress. Trees that are strong, least difficult when they mature."

Ms. George Added that the township is presently in compliance with the federation's core training requirements and the commission should file a report in February (2015).

Other topics of interest included suitable trees for planting, proper tree pruning methods, fertilizer (or no fertilizer).

Mr. Hoff indicated that, in the past, if there is a tree on private property, parallel to the road that may put the line out of service in a storm or otherwise, ACElectric would take the tree down (with property owner's permission) and the company would provide trees to plant in their place that are low growing and more compatible with the electric wires and facilities. He suggested contacting ACE forestry Department to see if replacement trees are still being offered and in turn we could pass the information to the property owners.

M. Rebmann will ask Mr. Di Cicco about contacting Ronnie Town with ACE to see if the trees are still being offered.

The Community Forestry Plan subcommittee (Ms. George, Mr. Rosenthal, Mr. Rebmann) reported that it is nearly finished with updates and revisions to the plan. Mr. Rosenthal suggested that it could be ready to submit to the commission in January for its review before it can be forwarded to the Township Committee (and then DEP).

Mr. Rebmann has also completed application for Community Forestry grant (\$3000) that could be applied in the event that the commission needs to secure the services of a professional arborist (if the DEP rejects the first plan submitted). That grant will be voted on at the December 2 township committee meeting (before being actually submitted).

Ms. George asked to invite Jody Carerra from ANJAC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) to address a future meeting about that organization's programs and services. The commission agreed. Mr. Rebmann will communicate to Ms Carerra regarding her availability.

There being no correspondence or bills to pay, Mr. Penrose closed the meeting.