

## **Dennis Township Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes June 17, 2015**

All Commission members were present except for Sue Slotterback who reported absent due to employment related training.

After the minutes for May were approved by voice vote, Mr. McManus led off with a recap of work at the municipal garden. He cited the recent work session during which members finished work on the pond, moved two benches into place, and with the help of Mr. Caster's weed eater, cleared paths. Mr. McManus said that another work session would be needed to line those paths with wood chips from the township. He estimated that the free chips needed would amount to four cubic yards. Mr. Rebmann will email Vernon Champion to request that the chips be left near the front entrance.

The commission agreed to set Sunday, July 19 at 1pm as the work date.

Mr. McManus also commended Dennisville Girl Scout Troop 56 for its recent efforts weeding the garden at the Old School House Museum. Roberta Nuss and her scouts not only weeded the garden but planted \$220 in native plants on the site, paying with money they raised by cleaning area roadways. The plants were obtained from the Nature Center of Cape May.

Mr. Rebmann will write a letter to Township Committee on behalf of DTEC, commending the scouts. In addition, the commission will present a proclamation to the group. Mr. Rebmann will also contact the Herald for possible coverage.

Guest for the meeting was Kim Herron. Ms Herron, Director of the Township Recreation Department, is also the township's Clean Communities Program Coordinator and it was in that capacity that she joined the meeting.

Ms. Herron began by describing the Clean Communities Program, saying that it is state funded from taxes raised on litter generating business. The underlying purpose of the program is educational. The township is awarded an amount each year based on a formula involving roadway miles and number of houses.

According to Ms. Herron, a variety of groups access the program via street litter clean-ups through which said groups are able to raise funds while improving the aesthetics of the community. Church groups, scouts, athletic associations, school peer leadership groups are just a few examples of those utilizing the program.

While the program is aimed at cleaning up township roads, experience has been that, given the large presence of county and state roads through Dennis Township, litter clean ups along said roadways has been covered under the program. Ms. Herron coordinates when and which roads will be done.

Supplies for clean-ups are provided by the CCP. This includes different colored bags for trash vs recyclables, an issue the commission encountered during its recent clean-up along Hagen Road. Ms. Herron also cited Vernon Champion for the positive contribution the DT Public Works Department has made.

Commission members asked what the commission can do to help facilitate the program and Ms. Herron advised vigilance and continuing public education about litter. She mentioned a few educational programs including a summer camp component about recycling.

Ms. Leatherwood and Ms. Herron talked about involving the school in some aspect of the CCP, particularly at the school's annual Health Fair and the pair will maintain communications on that subject, as well as a possible Clean Communities Day for the entire township.

Ms. Herron noted that, money aside, the greatest benefit derived from the program is increasing public awareness of the still existing problem of litter.

This year, the program received \$22,820 with most of it going to groups doing clean-ups. The commission agreed to maintain contact with Herron regarding its own future clean-up efforts and will coordinate those efforts with local groups including the school.

While there was no Land Use Board business, Mr. DiCicco mentioned that ARC was in the process of applying for grant money to be used to maintain/restore the historic Falkenburg House which serves as ARC's office in South Dennis. The ARC may have to appear before the Land Use Board at some future time depending on whether it gets the grant and what it plans to do with the money.

Ms. Leatherwood updated the commission on the increasing popularity of its Facebook page. She indicated that the issues most of the visitors appear to be interested in are: recycling, upcycling, composting, and creative reuse of otherwise disposable materials. She discussed encouraging students to think creatively about reusing materials either for practical purposes or as artwork and asked the commission to consider sponsoring a contest along those lines in the next school year. The commission agreed to this and the subject will be placed on a future agenda.

Mr. Rebmann had asked Ms Leatherwood to post information about problems being encountered with the emerald ash borer. While not a serious problem in this area due to the presence of few potentially affected trees, Mr. Rebmann wants to develop a means (in addition to the website And more traditional media contact) of getting out advisories about problems with pest infestations (such as gypsy moth).

Ms. Leatherwood suggested that the commission expand its technology use to include Twitter and Instagram, two communication forms favored by younger people (adults and children). The commission agreed to this and Ms. Leatherwood agreed to undertake developing the applications. She will also provide information for those commission members not versed in the technology.

Mr. Rebmann also asked commission members to consider what limits (if any) the commission wanted to establish regarding issues it would become involved with. He discussed specific communication asking

Mr. Penrose recommended a subcommittee consisting of Ms. Leatherwood, Mr. Hoff, and Mr. Caster to look into it further, as far as specifying in the mission statement those parameters the commission wishes to establish.

Mr. Penrose directed Mr. Rebmann to contact an individual who recently contacted the commission regarding access to the website to disseminate information about a particular environmental health issue.

Next on the agenda, Mr. Rebmann motioned to submit the Community Forestry Plan to Township Committee for its approval before forwarding it to the DEP. A subcommittee consisting of Rebmann, Mr. Rosenthal, and Ms. George had been working on the plan since last year. The full commission unanimously voted to move ahead with submitting the plan.

The commission next considered the ongoing issue with rumble strips on Route 47. Several members of the public attended the meeting for the purpose of being heard on this issue. The commission discussed points raised in a memorandum submitted by Mr. Rebmann with several commission members offering additional points.

Mr. Caster commented on the effects of snow/ice on the strips and how they it could cause vehicles to slide. Mr. Laughlin, a resident who lives along the road, expressed concern about how the strips affect motorcycles. Ms George commented about the sound created by trucks crossing the strips on Route 9 near her home in Ocean View and how the vibrations cause her house to shake. Her home, incidentally, was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The effect of vibrations on historic houses is another concern with the rumble strips.

Joan Berkey, a South Dennis resident on Route 47, is looking into the noise pollution and effect of the strips on historic homes. Mr. Laughlin observed that Route 47, at Holly Lake is a passing zone. Drivers there speed and the noise rattle his house.

Mr. Hoff added that the township committee had just passed a resolution opposing the strips in Dennis Township. Mr. DiCicco told the commission that the committee has been in contact with Will Morey, County Freeholder and that the matter is under consideration at that level. However, Route 47 is a state highway.

The public joined the discussion with Ocean View resident Janice Kenney. She asked for guidance to deal with her neighbor's intrusive bamboo, which has spread to her property, even invading the interior of a storage shed. The bamboo was planted six years ago to serve as a buffer between properties. Since that time, it has spread, undermining a fence.

Mr. Penrose observed that Ocean City passed an ordinance making it illegal to plant bamboo.

It's another issue of native vs. non-native plant species.

Mr. Rebmann said that he would contact Joseph Zoltowski from the NJ Department of Agriculture to get information on what Ms. Kenney can do about the problem. He also suggested contacting the USDA on Route 9 as well as the Cape May County Extension Service to solicit their expertise.

Ms. Leatherwood indicated that she would research the issue and post information on the commission's Facebook and website to inform the public. Mr. Rosenthal asked if Ms. Kenney had looked into filing a claim on her homeowner's insurance.

The commission agreed to do further research and inform Ms. Kenney and the public about solutions to intrusive bamboo.

The meeting concluded with member comments. Mr. Hoff asked about the status of the wood burning stove ordinance that the commission had developed. The matter rests in the hands of township committee where Mayor Murphy had formed a committee to deliberate on the matter. However, there's been no activity.

Dennis Township has no specifications governing the installation of these devices at the present time. One reason given for delaying action had been the lack of appropriate staff to handle the matter.

Since Dennis Township now has a permanent construction official, the commission will ask Mayor Murphy to call a meeting of the subcommittee to consider what action can be taken to enact an ordinance on outdoor wood boilers. This subcommittee should include a member of the environmental commission.

Mr. Hoff asked about the meetings about salt water intrusion, being conducted with bayside communities under the auspices of Senator Van Drew. The township has not participated in these meetings. Members were not aware of the date/time of the most recent meeting or of any future meetings.

The purpose of the meetings deals with how bayside communities can act to address erosion in the face of future storms (post Sandy).

The commission will learn more about the meetings and determine what role, if any, it will play in future deliberations.