

DENNIS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes: January 20, 2016.

Meeting held at 5:30 p.m. at the municipal building.

Chairman Bob Penrose led the flag salute to open the meeting. Reappointed members Brad Rosenthal and Sue Slotterback took their oaths from Committee liaison Lisa Salimbene.

ROLL CALL: All commission members were present.

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

There were no guests scheduled to speak at the meeting. However, Joanne DelVescio, Executive Director of NJ Campground Association presented the commission with copies of the association's 2016 travel guide. The publication, both print and on line, features an article about Dennis Township, written by Mr. Rebmann.

Responding to a question put to her at a prior meeting, Ms. DelVescio informed the commission that an in-progress survey will delineate the numbers of tent sites vs. cabins and RVs at township campgrounds. She will make the information available once the survey is completed.

Copies of the publication are already available at the Old School House Museum and at the municipal building.

Citing scheduling conflicts with local school board meetings, Ms. Leatherwood and Ms Salimbene requested that monthly meetings be held on another night than third Wednesday. The commission agreed to hold its meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month, same time and location. Mr. Rebmann will inform Township Clerk Justice so that proper notice can be provided to local media and the webmaster.

The commission also voted to renew its memberships in ANJEC and NJ Shade Tree Federation. Cost for both totals \$395. Mr. Rebmann will forward the requesting paperwork to the township's CFO for processing.

Mr. Castor noted that ANJEC offers a number of informative sessions that DTEC members should consider attending. He specifically mentioned "Fundamentals of Effective Environmental Commissions" next scheduled for March 5 at West Deptford. Ms. George has attended a previous session, echoed Mr. Castor's sentiment about the value of the program. Mr. Rosenthal also expressed interest in attending. Cost is \$35 per attendee. Mr. Rebmann will contact ANJEC and the CFO to make arrangements.

Next agenda item was an update on the memorial proposed to honor the late Eileen Turner. Township Committee has approved the idea. Ms. Salimbene asked if the site is near the planned bike path through the township, which it appears to be. In addition to a plaque honoring the volunteer work of Ms. Turner, the commission would like to place a bench and some native plantings near the memorial.

Mr. Rebmann asked if the memorial can be incorporated into the township's Open Space funding request for the bike path. Ms. Salimbene will contact Township Engineer Jack Gibson who is working on that application. At Ms. Leatherwood's suggestion, the commission will also contact the Turner family for input on wording for the memorial. Mr. Penrose will handle that.

Ms. George next discussed the annual seedling distribution, which has a February 12 deadline for applying for seedlings with a "pick up" date of April 8. The commission agreed to request 2000 seedlings this year, an increase of 500 from 2015. Members also discussed dates and event venues for distributing the seedlings, including April 9 possibly the date for a proposed Community Day at the local public school and April 16, which opening day for baseball at the recreation center. Mr. Rebmann also asked that seedlings be made available for distribution at the museum on that date.

Mr. Castor suggested showing a video at a future DTEC meeting dealing with the proper way to plant and maintain trees. Ms. Leatherwood indicated that she has developed a power point presentation on the subject that she could share. Ms. George noted that organizations like the Arbor Day Foundation and Atlantic City Electric have materials available.

Ms. George also shared some early good news. NJ DEP appears to have approved the commission's latest submitted five year Community Forestry Plan. Responding to a question from Mr. Castor, Ms. George said that the effort of keeping the work "in house" saved taxpayers \$3000, the price of paying a professional to do the plan. Members agreed that this "positive achievement" should be publicized on the township webpage, Facebook, and through ANJEC, once an official announcement is made.

Mr. McManus updated the commission on the condition of township dams after an inspection tour on January 16 conducted by Messrs. Diccico, McManus, and Rebmann. They took photos at four locations, while Ms. George conducted an inspection at Magnolia Lake in Ocean View. Sites examined included Dennisville Lake, Ludlam's Pond, East Creek Pond, and Pickle Pond. Pickle Pond was the only dam that showed visible signs of leaks. The commission will pass this information along to township committee and the municipal engineer. Mr. Castor added that he will conduct an inspection of Beaver Dam in South Dennis.

Mr. Rebmann added that, after the commission's work has been reviewed by township committee, it will be forwarded to Senator Van Drew who is spearheading a study of coastal flooding issues in Cape May County.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of member suggestions for specific commission activities for 2016. Several members were prepared with a number of ideas, including Ms. Leatherwood (see attached list) and Mr. Castor.

Suggestions included: a commission sponsored movie night, a rain barrel workshop, and a seedling exchange. Ms. Leatherwood stressed that the commission needs to be a community organization that educates and communicates. She cited the continued growth of the audience for the commission's Facebook page and offered to conduct a demonstration or members and the public on how to fully utilize Facebook and other social media. Mr. Rebmann will list this on an upcoming meeting agenda. Better communication could increase attendance at commission meetings which usually feature interesting guest speakers, including the American Littoral Society. Members requested that the Littoral Society be invited to address the commission again in 2016...hopefully with a larger public turnout.

Mr. Castor suggested a community plant seedling exchange to kick off the "gardening season". Mr. Penrose formed a subcommittee to develop this idea with Mr. Castor, Ms. Slotterback, and Mr. Rebmann. Ms. Leatherwood will also participate. Rebmann suggested using the museum in Dennisville for the event.

Ms. Slotterback described a program she knows, "Gently Used Tools for Schools" involving donated garden tools such as rakes that can be shared with those who need them.

Ms. George advised conducting a survey of noteworthy trees in the township, a suggestion that will fulfill a requirement of the Community Forestry Plan. That matter will be pursued during the course of 2016.

Ms. Salimbene discussed communication township committee received from a South Seaville resident complaining about getting unsolicited newspapers, which accumulate in the driveway whenever he's away. She contacted NJ Press Association and Press of Atlantic City. She was told by a representative of the latter that the paper will run an ad on page three providing information on how to stop carriers from dropping unwanted papers.

Mr. Rebmann will develop a statement to be listed on the commission web page, Facebook, and submit it to township committee.

There being no other business, Mr. Penrose closed the meeting.

