

DENNIS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes: May 20, 2016.

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

Chairman Bob Penrose led the flag salute to open the meeting.

Ms George, Mr. Hoff, and Mr. Rosenthal were absent.

The committee voted to table approval of the April meeting minutes.

Guest speaker was Don Gooch, Dennisville property owner and member of Dennisville Historic Homeowners Association.

Mr. Gooch shared photos of two properties in Dennisville on Petersburg Road that appear to be unoccupied and have been neglected. His property neighbors these. He indicated that at least one of the properties may have been vandalized recently. He cites a door that had been left ajar and which constantly bangs as well as unkempt landscaping, particularly overgrown hedges at the front of one. He added that swimming pools on the property, filled with stagnant water, offer mosquito breeding grounds and open doors invites intruders and vandals.

Mr. Gooch notes that he'd spoken to the previous mayor (Glembocki) about the matter and was told that it would be addressed by the township. To date, it has not.

Mr. Penrose asked the identity of owner of the property. A bank may be the owner of one of the properties, Mr. Gooch replied. He wasn't sure about the other, but indicated that it would be offered at sheriff's sale in June. It has been empty about two years and is partly boarded up and being near the heart of historic Dennisville, detracts from the character of the community.

Mr. Gooch added that public safety could become an issue as the overgrown hedges are creating a visual obstruction for motorists on busy Petersburg Road. Mr. Castor concurred with this and noted that the township code calls for specific vegetation heights and distances from streets.

Ms. Salimbene, township committee liaison to the commission, notes that she and Code Enforcement officer Dave Gonham are developing a workable solution to the addressing "problem properties".

Mr. McManus suggested the need for a solution as the township has seen an increase in the number of unkempt properties. Mr. Gooch agreed and referred to Lower Township which addresses the problem by having public works perform clean up chores and charging the owner of record.

Ms. Salimbene answered in the affirmative in response to Mr. Penrose asking if the township has a property maintenance ordinance. He recommended that township code

enforcement explore available feasible corrective measures. Ms. Salimbene will report back to the commission about her discussions with Mr. Gonham.

Next, Mr. Rebmann summarized current applications before the township's Land Use Board. Of particular interest to the commission was the ***** application to construct a building containing five potential sites for retail businesses. The project is sited on Route 47 across from the Dennisville Wawa.

Members expressed concerns about traffic impact, proximity to wetlands, and status of the "dump" currently on the property.

Mr. Castor suggested the need for soil testing. Other members agreed that an Environmental Impact Study should be conducted.

Mr. Rebmann indicated that the application had been withdrawn as the applicant is working on a site plan needed for the application.

Mr. McManus mentioned another Route 47 property in that area, the former Captian Tate's, noting that a wetlands delineation request had been submitted. Other work has been done on the currently unoccupied property, including new roofing, plumbing and electrical, and windows. Mr. Rebmann speculated that the delineation might be a prelude to installing septic on the property.

Next on the agenda, Mr. Rebmann asked the commission to develop a handout/website notice for township property owners considering selling their homes. His specific concern is with NJ State Health Department rules governing distances between wells and septic systems and how these rules are used in determining eligibility for certain types of mortgages.

Mr. Penrose suggested adding a link to the DTEC web page referring anyone interested in learning more. Mr. Rebmann will work on that with the township web master.

Under ongoing business, Mr. Rebmann updated the commission on the Turner Memorial. Unfortunately, the commission was not awarded an ANJEC grant, he said. He added that neither of the original proposed sites is owned by the township. However, there are other options including the front of the municipal complex between the garden and Petersburg Road.

Ms. Salimbene suggested the commission consider locating the memorial at the recreation center, where an expansion is being planned at the former Kapp property. The township has applied for Open Space funding for an extended walking path, and playing fields.

She said that township engineer Jack Gibson is working on the grant application and, responding to Mr. Rebmann's question about including the memorial project in that grant, recommended inviting Mr. Gibson to the next commission meeting to discuss the idea. Mr. Rebmann will do that.

Mr. McManus advised members that the scheduled work session was partly rained out but mulch was spread at the museum and preliminary work and markings were completed to relocate the shed. Wood chips will be ordered for the municipal garden. The commission set another work date of June 12 at the museum.

The commission next heard an update on the successful bluebird nesting at the Hagen Road School. The nest is being monitored by Mr. Rosenthal. Bluebirds have fledged and were banded recently.

Ms. Slotterback also reminded the commission that the last day for public tagging of horseshore crabs is June 3. She has been actively engaged in that project.

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