



TOWNSHIP OF DENNIS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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VIRTUAL MEETING Minutes for Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:30 pm

Present were: Penrose (Chairman), Rebmann, Slotterback, Turner (Vice-Chairman). Members Herlihy, Rosenthal, and Salimbene were absent.

Also attending were Scott Turner/Dennis Township Committee, Shane Godshall from American Littoral Society, and Loretta Pregartner, Americorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassador.

Ms Pregartner led off with a brief introduction of herself. Mr. Penrose indicated that she will participate in December's commission meeting.

Mr. Godshall followed with a description of the functions of the Littoral Society. These include: watershed protection, conservation and education. Specific areas of interest are rain gardens and barrels, migratory birds, and horseshoe crabs. The society is involved in annual horseshoe crab tagging with NJ Fish and Wildlife along the bay. These are some of his specific duties as Habitat Restoration Regional Manager. His office is in Millville. Mr. Turner asked if there are "volunteer opportunities" with the society and was told about reef construction and "shellabration" for which members of the public can help place bags to help create artificial reefs.

Of interest to the commission on this occasion is the society's planned work along the Delaware Bay.

Mr. Godshall's appearance concerned the society's permit application for a five year beach and reef replenishment project, involving bayside sites in Cumberland and Cape May Counties. No locations for beach "profiles" have been selected yet and he indicated that as of now, nothing was in the plans for Dennis Township. He added that the commission would be notified in the event that changed.

After the presentation, members approved the minutes of the October virtual meeting.

Mr. Penrose went over correspondence, informing the commission that Pinelands had approved a permit for a three lot subdivision. He also said that the township's Land Use Board had approved Holly Lake Condo Getaway application to create an in/out access onto Route 47 which had previously been an exit only. Land Use also approved Frank Edwardi's storage unit in the Ocean View Center District. Mr. Penrose added that there were no endangered plant/animal species at the site..

He also advised that Pierson Pleasantville had applied or would be applying to the Land Use Board to renew its resource extractions permit. Mr. Turner pointed out that this was not yet on the Land Use agenda. The applicant has indicated that it will "reclaim areas affected" by activities.

Updating status at the municipal garden, Ms. Slotterback informed the commission that she'd recently examined the area and found that pumpkin vines had "taken over and four huge pumpkins had grown along the fence. Public Works had recently repaired the fence. Several plants had been removed, including the honeysuckle. Ms. Slotterback also indicated she'd marked out a number of plants with yellow flags. She also offered to dig up some of the plants and winter them at her home. Public Works will eventually rototill the area.

Mr. Penrose advised that he had laid out some compost in the garden and the pumpkin seeds might have been in that compost. He had Mr. Rosenthal had previously dug out and tilled the area, discovering that the soil was hallow so rototilling might not be feasible. He believes there isn't much option at that site other than maintaining the paths and weeding.

Scott Turner advised that the township has a back hoe and if necessary, the garden can be restarted "from scratch". The area used to be a playground. Justin Turner asked if raised bed gardens might be a way to go with Mr. Penrose adding that pie-shaped raised beds without borders might be an option.

Mr. Rebmann asked about the condition of the pond and was told there is possibly a leak in the liner.

In further discussion, stone paved pathways were mentioned as well as an estimated \$20-30,000 cost to hardscape the area with suitable materials. It was pointed out that compost "grows weeds". Mulch is partially effective for keeping weeds down but constant weeding attention is needed if the current garden is to be maintained.

Ms. Slotterback also advised that the "Model Backyard Habitat" sign was missing. Mr. Penrose will email Jessica Bishop (Township CFO) to learn if Public Works pulled it during maintenance work.

Mr. Turner updated the commission on the status of the plastic bag ordinance at the state level, noting that it had not been signed by the governor as of the meeting date. He added that there had been some push back about banning paper as well as plastic.

There being no further business or public comment, Mr. Penrose closed the meeting.