

**TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REORGANIZATION & REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2019**

Call to Order

The re-organization and regular meeting of the Township of Morris Environmental Commission was called to order on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 7:00 P.M., in the Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Avenue, Township of Morris

Statement of Adequate Notice

Chairman Falkner issued the following statement:

"I hereby announce and state that adequate notice of this meeting was provided by the Secretary of the Environmental Commission by preparing a notice dated January 7, 2019, specifying the time, date and place of this meeting; posting such notice on the bulletin board in the municipal building; filing said notice with the Clerk of the Township of Morris; forwarding the notice to the Morris County Daily Record and The Morris News Bee, and forwarding, by mail, and I hereby hand a copy of such notice to the Secretary of the Environmental Commission for inclusion in the minutes of this meeting, all of the above actions being in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10"4-6, Et. Seq., Open Public Meeting Act."

Attendance

Members Present

Daniel Falkner, Chairman
Steve Tractenberg
Siva S. Jonnada
Tilly Jo Emerson
Joshua Saks, Alt. 1
Daniel Kenney, Alt. 2

Members Absent

Jaraun K. Wright
Craig Giannantonio, Alt. 1
Honeah Mangione

Also Present

Sonia Santiago, Secretary
James R. Slate, Township Engineer
Timothy Quinn, Township Administrator

Public

Cathy Wilson – 20 Beechwood Drive
Mark Gyorfy – 61 Alexandria Road

Sonia Santiago administered the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Office to the following members:

- Siva S. Jonnada
- Daniel Falkner
- Tilly Jo Emerson
- Joshua Saks, Alt. 1
- Daniel Kenney, Alt. 2

Resolutions

Mr. Saks moved seconded by Mr. Tractenberg and unanimously carried the resolutions setting meeting dates for the year 2019 and January 2020 and designating the official newspaper were adopted as circulated.

Consideration for approval of minutes of the November 8, 2018 regular meeting.

Minutes were tabled to the next meeting due to members absent.

New Business:

New Members Orientation – One of the main functions of the EC is to advise the Planning and Zoning Board when applications come to the Township and they come here for an Environmental Commission review. This is the chance for input on environmental impact for any planned development in Town. Jim will go over it with the Commission. It's something that we should all be aware and it is an important role of the Commission; understanding what is required, what is the scope and how it connects to the other Boards inside the Township because there are deadlines when these applications come in.

Mr. Slate stated that Mr. Falkner printed out a document on site plan / subdivision review from the Environmental aspect it gives an overview and there is another one that is general Environmental Commission information if anyone is interested it can be found on the ANJEC website.

He further stated that what he normally does at the meeting is review applications that have been submitted to the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment. The applications come in and are distributed to the different departments and they are scheduled for a TCC meeting. It is also distributed to the Town Planner, Board Attorney and the Town Engineer. So everyone will look at the plan and if they have any comments they will issue a report. At the TCC meeting we will review it for a number of items such as stormwater management, traffic, grading, tree removal, basically, all aspects of the plan and make sure that the Planning Board has everything they might need. There are reports that are issued by the TCC and the Environmental Commission that goes to the Planning Board or Board of adjustment and they are read into the record so that they know about Environmental Commission concerns, typically issues will come up, it is also distributed to the applicant so that the applicant's professionals during testimony will address those concerns. Mr. Slate informed the Commission that he was willing to go with them for the site visit and guide them through the process. A discussion was carried regarding the site inspections and documentation submitted for any of the applications.

OS Liaison – Mr. Quinn informed the Commission that the OS meets three times a year and they look at opportunities were the Township may take funds that are reserved for Open Space and purchase properties to go into open space inventory. It may be something that we are looking for trails or recreational facility. The opportunities are limited as to what we have to do. We have a number of properties around Town that we are keeping our eyes on and when they become available we would work with the property owners to see if they wish to sell, a lot of the times we would go through the County Open Space for funding.

This is similar to what we did several years ago with Valley View on Picatinny Road we bought 21 acres in conjunction with County Open Space funding and also MUA funding it's all passive, we have built our community garden and trails that go along the wooded side and comes out to Reed Road and it also had restrictions that they could not further subdivide the property unless it is sold for Open Space acquisition. We restricted future development on that site by limiting 29 acres to three building lots.

We have bought Baker Evans Farm off of Lake Valley Road a five acre site for a small playground and passive recreation. We bought Jockey Hollow Top off of Rolling Hill Drive that goes all the way down to Mt. Kemble Avenue. We bought property in Washington Valley the Spence / Doremus Estate and most of these are for passive recreation. The Committee meets three times a year, they meet in January, in the spring and then we meet in the fall. The January meeting will be if we have any proposed discussions with any property owner who wishes to sell off a piece of their property, we will work with them and then we will submit an application to the County Open Space. This is an advisory Committee that recommends to the Township Committee consider making the purchase for Open Space. Some of the small ones we do on our own, the bigger ones we do it in conjunction with the County Open Space to purchase. Most of the work while we are doing the acquisition goes into a closed session so it becomes confidential because it's a personal piece of property and often time's discussion with the property owner in negotiation and it does not become public information until the Township Committee puts forward the application. A lot of the discussions are in closed session when we are dealing with the acquisition of a piece of property. Mr. Tractenberg volunteered to sit on the Open Space Committee as a liaison for the Environmental Commission. He was informed that the Open Space meeting will be held Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

New applications referred from the Planning Board:

PB-12-18, Philip & Barbara Sellinger, 2 Old Glen Road, Applicant proposes a minor subdivision to create one additional lot. Mr. Slate presented the application to the Commission and informed them that the property owners have the ability to slice off a piece of the property that contains the carriage house, it is a fully conforming minor subdivision which meets all of the zoning requirements for the RA-15 zone and no notice is required. Typically what we require on a minor subdivision is to put a house foot print on the plan that is consistent with the neighborhood that will show the grading disturbance, we also like to see the utilities. There is also a garage on the existing house and a driveway area with a turnaround and what they are proposing is a loop driveway in front of the existing house and they would like to maintain the portion of the driveway that is going to be on the proposed new lot, they are proposing an easement to access the garage. Mr. Falkner volunteered to do the site visit and provide a report.

PB-13-18, Paglianite / Merrywood Development, LLC, 4-8 Merrywood Court, Applicant proposes a minor subdivision with variance for a lot line adjustment. Mr. Slate presented the application to the Commission and informed them that this also was for a minor subdivision lot line adjustment with a variance on a subdivision that was approved approximately 10 years ago. The applicant has filed a map, it was one lot and subdivided the property into three lots there is a cul de sac off of Sussex Avenue there was a detention basin that was constructed as part of the development to offset increased runoff there is an existing house that fronts Sussex Avenue, to the west is Rose Arbor and then Whippany River and Patriot Path is to the east. The applicant never moved forward with building homes on the two lots to the rear. The building envelope is somewhat constrained there are wetlands to the rear of the property which has a 150 foot buffer; there was a conservation easement on the property as part of the permitting according to DEP. What he is proposing are lot line adjustments, it is currently three lots and he is adjusting the property line approximately twenty feet and he is also requesting a variance for a front yard setback which requires a 75 foot setback and he is proposing 55 feet in order to create a bigger building envelop. This is a minor subdivision with variance which requires meeting notice to property owners within 200 feet. A discussion was carried regarding the property among the members. Ms. Emerson volunteered to do the site visit and provide a report.

New applications referred from the Board of Adjustment

No applications to be reviewed by the Environmental Commission.

Correspondence

The following were noted as received for the record:

12-17-2018 ANJEC – Mr. Falkner informed the Commission that this is the membership for joining ANJEC it seems like a great thing for us to get familiar with. This is where the Site Plan / Subdivision Review document came from.

Sonia informed the Commission that she will register the Commission with ANJEC, this is a very resourceful agency, they also have seminars please take advantage of it since it is part of the registration. Mr. Falkner informed the Commission that there is going to be a round table discussion on February 7, 2019 at the Arboretum from 6:30 to 8:30 pm which they will discuss the new DEP stormwater rules.

General Business

Status Reports:

Whippany River Watershed Action Committee – Mr. Tractenberg stated that he was unable to attend the last meeting and asked if anyone would like to attend. Ms. Wilson stated that she had spoken to Mr. Jonnada to represent the Township as a resident. I thought we had someone as our resident representative so the position that is open is the EC liaison. Mr. Jonnada volunteered to represent the EC at the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee.

Public Commentary

Mark Gyorfy congratulated the new members of the Commission and look forward to working with everyone on the issues that comes to the Township Committee and putting good efforts towards preserving what the Township has to offer with regard to environmental issues.

Commentary by Committee Members

Mr. Falkner stated that he is happy to be taking over the chair position of the EC. I've been to a few of these meeting recently, so the reason why I'm here is because this Commission can do more things, we need to change the organization participation strategic direction and there is opportunities for us to play a big role in the Township. I'm here because I live in the Township for the past five years and I love living in this Town. What I would like to know is why you all volunteered to be in this Commission. What are you hoping to get from the Environmental Commission for 2019?

Ms. Emerson stated that when she retires, she would need something else to do. Her interest is what she can do at the local level for Morris Township and Morristown because we have to work as locally as we can.

Mr. Kenney stated that he attended the ANJEC Congress 2018 and has been doing a lot of reading on climate change is going to do to our ocean in the next few years and we are headed to catastrophe, it doesn't get any better. What he has been reading is that the best place to start is right on your own backyard. I just had the energy audit done, I obviously care for the Town and I think we can do more.

Mr. Saks stated that he has been in the Town for forty years he is concerned about the environment and is looking for joint opportunities with other Towns for the problems that are in the horizon.

Mr. Jonnada stated that he is semi-retired, is interested in the environment and energy and would like to bring his expertise on data analytics into the Commission.

Mr. Tractenberg stated he has been in Town since 2005 and would like to make things better, likes to share information regarding recycling and other issues with the neighbors.

Mr. Falkner stated that one of the things we would like to do is to run efficient meetings. He would like to set the agenda ahead of time. I will send Sonia items to list on the agenda. If anyone has any suggestions for the next meetings please send it to me. I will make sure that it will be on the agenda. Part of that is also communicating what our topics will be so that we can complete our own research and come prepared so that we can have a fruitful discussion. Site plan is the big part that we do; it may not be the most glamorous part. It is one of the most important parts, ensuring that we are meeting any deadline so that other Township procedures are not held up by us. We want to make sure that we do it and we do it well.

We are going to learn as we go along as we interact with other pieces of the Township, such as the Open Space, Township Committee and other Committees that are out there, what I see there might be some overlap in different things and with Tim's guidance in making sure that we adhere to the sunshine law. Making sure we are effectively communicating with other parts of the Township Committee.

He further stated that he is open to comments, criticism and feedback on how can we run meetings effectively. His view of the EC responsibility is advisory and education, those are the two things we do here. We advise on the site plan applications, there is an ability to advise the Township Committee if there is a policy recommendation that we think we can recommend and the last is education, we educate ourselves on issues that are going on in the Township and we educate the public. There is work that we can do on issues that affect the Township and how do we effectively communicate that. A good one would be the upcoming changes in the recycling program. There are going to be changes coming and what is allowed to be recycled in terms of plastic, we know the market has changed and what China is buying.

For the next meeting we can get someone from DPW to come and speak to us on the changes that are coming and take them back to our neighborhoods, when they are coming into effect and figure out ways that we might be able to educate. What he would like to do for the meetings coming forward is to setup topics that we are going to discuss. Topics that are relevant to the Township and we want to educate ourselves, perhaps a guest speaker. By the end of the year when we go through the topics we decide to educate or we decide to advise or we decide it was good to know but we are unable to do anything meaningful. By the end of the year we should turn it into something maybe an environmental action plan or a notice that we plan to deliver to the Township Committee. The point is that if we are spending time researching all these things, there should be a mechanism to act on it. So by next meeting I will come up with a draft of topics to schedule them out and if we need to get speakers to talk to us we can schedule it ahead of time.

Events – there are events that are coming up, there are community events, cleanup day, earth day, and it would be helpful for us to get these events into our calendar if we are going to participate, this should be fun, we are all volunteers, we will do things together, we will have discussions and debates and we will get through the things we need to get to. A discussion was carried regarding possible topics for future meetings, such as food wasting, composting, energy efficiency and climate change.

Mr. Falkner announced that at the Township Re-organization Committee meeting there was a standing committee announced on Environment Energy and Sustainability that consists of Deputy Mayor Wilson and Committeeman Gyorfy. This is fairly new and it's an opportunity for us to coordinate our efforts with the standing committee on matters that overlap. This committee is new, we are going to work what that working relationship looks like and what that communication is and the best way to cut our work with the Standing Committee and the Environmental Commission. There are things that are outlined that have been approved by the Township Committee issues and topics that we have kind of addressed.

Ms. Wilson stated that she has been coming to the EC meetings for the past five years and the center piece of the EC has been the review of site plan applications, but there are other issues that can be done. We would like to see the EC be more active in other issues. There are a number of issues to choose from. Would like to see the EC work on discussing and selecting what are the goals and priorities of the group to supplement the time spent on the site plan review.

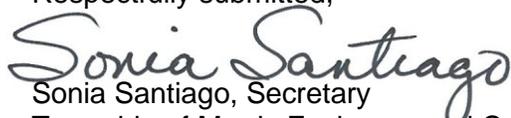
There was also a green team that was established last year and it was informal, I think there is a place here for discussion to formalize that. That connects then with what would be the goals and membership of the green team that would be something to be discussed by this body. On a more long range horizon, I think there is a need to discuss whether there should be an environmental element added to the Master Plan. These are policy matters and it is the Township Committees job to set policy. It is her opinion as a member of the Township Committee that the environmental energy sustainability issues need attention from this group by collaborating to develop some type of policy for our Town in ways that have not been present before. This is new and has not been done before. That's why we decided to establish a standing committee on Environmental Energy and Sustainability and this group is the organization in our town that works on environmental issues. There are a lot of things that can be done and I look forward to seeing what can be done.

She further stated that we would like to see more communication with SMCMUA, we are hearing from residents there are various issues that have come up with water quality. We have two members from SMCMUA from our town that represents our town on this Board. I have reached out to them and have informed them that we would like a line of communication and they have volunteered to come and do a presentation to our group or they could send a representative to this group. Another aspect of the standing committee on Environment Energy and Sustainability that you will see at the Township Committee this year is that we will have reports from the standing committees to share information with the Community. Township Committee meetings are now televised and it's on the website, Facebook and TV. These are new features that are out there that I would like the Environmental Commission to be aware of.

Mr. Falkner stated that the way he sees this is that we need to educate ourselves on a bunch of topics. We need to get a schedule of topics to educate ourselves such as water quality. What are the issues that we think are prevalent and affecting the Township and what can we take meaningful action on. To the point that the Deputy Mayor made is that by the end of the year all of these topics that we research, we should decide how to chart the course of the Committee and provide something in writing to the Standing Committee or Township Committee regarding all the topics that we have researched and educated ourselves and how it will be done. This is a good guidance of where we should be spending our time.

With no further business for consideration by the Township of Morris Environmental Commission, on motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Sonia Santiago, Secretary
Township of Morris Environmental Commission
Approved: March 14, 2019