

**Mendham Township Environmental Commission
Minutes March 21, 2016**

Attending: Chair in Rich Cotter's absence – Jamie Kinsel
Brian Boden, Teri Cosentino, John Mallon, Ralph Rhodes

Jamie distributed the agenda and agreed to take the minutes. Minutes for the February 2016 meeting were accepted.

Planning Board, Board of Adj & TRC: Jamie reported that the March Planning Board and TRC meetings were cancelled. No Board of Adjustment applications were received for comment.

NJ Freshwater Wetland Protection Program: PSE&G has applied to NJDEP for a permit approval to conduct repair, replacement and maintenance activities on existing utility structures within freshwater wetlands and open waters.

Open Space: John Mallon reported on the walk he and Rich took to investigate the Buck Hill property. They used the gated entrance along Tempe Wick. Ralph walked Tempe Wick and noted a tremendous amount of litter. The proposed Scout project of an observation deck at the property was not encouraged. Ralph will get updated information to Jon Wagar for the Hike Mendham website.

Monitoring Conservation Easements: Susan continues to work with Sarah Dean to re-establish EC notification to new homeowners who purchase properties with easements on their property.

2016 Finances: Clean Community Funds were used to send \$300 for RHA support in 2016. Ralph submitted a 2016 grant application for \$500 to Somerset Hills Garden Club. Funds of \$300 remain unspent from the 2015 grant received. These funds will be used to plant around the India Brook Park sign.

Twp. Open Space Committee: Brian reported that he has not heard anything about this newly re-activated committee. He will check the Twp. website for membership information.

2015 Annual Report: Ralph drafted the 2015 EC Annual Report for Rich to submit when he returns. Brian felt that mention should be made of the fact that conservation easements will eventually need to be re-inspected. Covering the cost is an issue to be kept in mind.

2016 Electronic Recycling: The Commission approved sending the letter drafted by Jamie concerning the increasing difficulty of e-waste recycling in NJ. It will go to the Twp.'s State representatives with copies to the Twp. Committee and Governor Christie. An abbreviated version will go to the Observer. Jamie investigated the MUA website recycling information for Mendham Twp. and found it to be badly out of date. Rich brought this to Mary Beth's attention and the Twp. Clerk will follow up with the MUA to update the information. Richard Fernicola is the Twp. recycling coordinator as no one in the Twp. has the required certification to file the necessary reports.

Three Rivers Festival: Teri reported that this joint event with the Mendham Borough EC will be held on Saturday, April 16th. The event begins at 9 AM at the Borough Mud Hole. Volunteers split off at 10 to do stream/litter clean-up. Teri will lead volunteers along Combs Hollow into Buttermilk Falls. RHA publicizes and provides garbage bags and gloves. There is an online sign up for the event at www.RaritanHeadwaters.org/StreamCleanUp. Teri will come up with a publicizing recap to be

submitted to the Twp. for the website and an email blast. The Commission will have tables at the event with trail maps, open space brochures, and information on Adopt a Byway and the May 7th free seedling give a way event. Teri will bring a table with displays as well.

2016 NJ Tree Recovery Campaign: Free native bare root seedlings together with planting directions will be given away to residents in an effort to replant the trees lost in the storm events over the last several years. The Twp. DPW will pick up our 250 trees on Friday, May 6. These will need to be divided into groups of five and distributed to the first 50 families on Saturday, May 7 in the Town Hall parking lot from 10 AM – 12 noon. Jamie distributed a sample of the poster provided by the campaign. Publicity efforts will be directed to the local newspaper, library, post office, elementary schools, Scouts, Schiff, Township website. Jamie emailed Brian Hays, Tree Committee Chair, to welcome their participation.

Monarchs & Milkweed: Brian is working on an idea to promote planting native milkweed in our open space properties in an effort to support the declining Monarch population. There are two milkweed plants native to NJ, one suitable for wetlands. Another possibility would be to incorporate handing out seeds and information to educate the public during the May 7th seedling event.

2016 ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grants: The Commission discussed submitting a grant proposal for reprinting the Mendham Twp. Trails Map. Jamie had obtained information and a quote from Bernardsville Print Center. In the end the Commission decided not to submit the project as the information in the brochure would be outdated and incomplete. Future reprinting of the individual park trail maps and updating the information on hikemendham.org were considered to be more useful ways to help hikers.

Social Media: Teri proposed starting a Facebook page for the Mendham Twp. Environmental Commission as a way to publicize many of the issues and upcoming events discussed at tonight's meeting. The Commission felt this was a great idea.

ANJEC Environmental Commission Training: Both Teri and John attended the March 19th training. They will report on items covered at the April meeting. One ANJEC resource paper, Open Space is a Good Investment – the Financial Argument, will be forwarded to our Twp. Committee liaison, Diana Orban Brown, with the request that it be shared with the entire Twp. Committee.

Next meeting: April 18, 2016