

**Mendham Township Environmental Commission
Minutes December 19, 2016**

Attending: Chair Rich Cotter
Jamie Kinsel, John Mallon, Ralph Rhodes, Susan Schmerler

Rich distributed the agenda and Jamie agreed to take the minutes. Minutes for the November 2016 meeting were accepted. These minutes are posted on the Township Hall bulletin board and Township website.

Brian Cowden of Trout Scapes River Restoration based both in Montana and locally in Flanders, presented their outline of a proposed bank restoration along the North Branch of the Raritan here in the Township. They have been hired by residents Huntley/Donaldson at 13 Roxiticus Road to halt the erosion along their property which threatens their septic system. No Township funds would be involved but permission to cross already cleared Township property with heavy equipment would be requested. After reviewing previously completed and similar stabilization projects and the soil bioengineering methods that would be used on this project, the Commission unanimously agreed that the project as outlined would be beneficial to the Township and Township residents and result in a healthier stretch of the stream itself. Brian will keep the Commission updated with finalized plans.

Treasurer's Report: Susan reported that \$500 is the EC's 2017 budget line item in the Township's draft budget. Approximately \$39 is left of the 2016 \$500 budget after ANJEC dues, Chair's ANJEC 43rd Annual Congress attendance fee on September 30 and purchase of the new 4' by 2' banner. \$530 is in a separate Trust Account (includes Somerset Hills Garden Club grants) and \$16,000 is in a third account to be used by the EC for capital projects (5 year life). Ralph distributed a list of potential grant projects for the Commission to review. Comments will be reviewed at the next meeting. ANJEC Open Space Stewardship Grant applications for up to \$1,500 will be online in mid-January. Applications are due back early April. No cash match is required.

Open Space: The Commission discussed ongoing concerns about continued clearing at Mosle Preserve by a resident using heavy equipment. In 2017 the newly formed Township Committee plans to gather input on Open Space from all Township organizations, committees and commissions. Ralph distributed a list of Open Space map availability. John noted Buck Hill should be posted.

Planning Board, Board of Adj & TRC: Jamie reported that the Planning Board meets January 3rd to re-organize for 2017.

NJ Freshwater Wetland Protection Program: No notices.

Raritan and Passaic Water Quality: Rich distributed reports from the watershed conferences held December 3rd and 13th. He would like Sandra LaVigne, Director of Water Quality Programs for the Passaic, to address the Commission. New test standards take effect in 2017.

December 28th Styrofoam Recycling: Rich reported the collection of bulky Polystyrene foam blocks, commonly used for the packaging of electronics, for recycling will be held 12/28 from 9-2 at the Borough DPW. John Mallon was instrumental in working out the location availability. The Township DPW will provide trash bags and transportation of the collected material to the recycling facility. The event is being publicized on Mendham TV, through the Township's social media and with posters at Kings, the Library and Brookside Post Office. Information went to the Township Elementary and Middle Schools as well.

Emerald Ash Borer: The Township Administrator attended a meeting about the deadly threat to ash trees. She had questions about whether the Township had a community forest plan and or a tree conservation officer. Jamie pointed her to the existing Tree Preservation Ordinances and put her in touch via email with Brian Hays, chair of the Tree Preservation Committee. Brian confirmed there is no community forest plan. There is a tree conservation officer, John Linson, licensed forester. He is used on an as needed basis – the last time was three years ago. The Commission’s role to publicize and educate residents on the issue will continue with brochures available on December 28th at the Styrofoam Recycling event.

Somerset Hills Garden Club Grants: Ralph previously shared an email from Country Nursery with a bid of \$5,320 for planting (10) 7-8’ Norway Spruce and (1) 8-10’ Dogwood in two triangular beds at the India Brook Park entrance (one year guarantee on trees). John Mallon will continue a discussion with a local contractor about donating labor with signage acknowledging the contribution.

Adopt A Byway & Litter Cleanup: Brian sent word that the area around Drakewick’s retention pond was cleaned by homeowners. The Commission will pick another area to concentrate on in the spring. The possibility of engaging S.L.A.P. involvement along Tempe Wick will be investigated. Ralph will check to see if there are any website responses to sign up to Adopt a Byway.

2017 Commission Membership: The Commission consists of seven regular members (appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years) and two alternates (appointed by the Mayor for a term of two years). The Commission will ask for John Mallon to move from alternate to regular member, term to expire in 2019. This leaves an opening for one alternate member to be appointed to a two year term.

Next meeting: January 16, 2017 7:30 PM