



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

For the special meeting of
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Note: this meeting was conducted and recorded using a Zoom videoconferencing application.

* The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm by Nora Sirbaugh.

Statement of Compliance & Roll Call

Members present: Nora Sirbaugh, Andrew Plunkett, Mike Aucott, Vanessa Sandom, Rex Parker, Mark Bean, Paul Kinney and Jim Gambino

Members absent: George Kerr

Also present: Mark Kataryniak - Twp Administrative Officer

Courtney Peters-Manning – Twp Liaison

Members of the Public present: none

Minutes for Approval

The January 19, 2021 draft minutes were approved– Motion, Mike; 2nd Andrew; all in favor.

Action: Jim will forward these minutes to Jaimie Laird for posting on the Township website.

Stream Corridor Permit Application Review

Miriam Kollman & Barbara Bingham; Block 44, Lot 23; 209 Blackwell Road,
VRC Zoning District; above ground pool.

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K.

A Stony Brook tributary runs through this property. The proposed pool will encroach approximately 390 feet into the stream buffer area. No tree removal is proposed.

Action: We approved the project with the condition that the applicant shall be required to plant an area of 390 square feet of woody plants, trees or shrubs, at a location of the applicant's choice on the property to offset the area of disturbance in the stream corridor. All plantings should be chosen from the Township's approved plant list in Section 17-89 of the Landscape Ordinance.

Zoning Board Application Review

Case No. 2020-25: **Donne Deck**

Block 78.42, Lot 11; 56 Manley Road;

R-5 Zoning District

Bulk Variance; Rear Deck

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. and have no environmental concerns for the proposed project.

Action: Jim will prepare and send our review comments via memo to Jaimie Laird to post with this application on the Township website.

Planning Board Application Reviews

1. Hopewell Parc

Block 93, Lots 5.01, 5.02, 6.02; 445 & 449 Scotch Road, IPD-1 Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Major Subdivision & Site Plan

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. and have the following concerns.

Trees - We understand the applicant conducted sample tree surveys at only five locations and question if there are any significant trees located in any non-surveyed areas of the property. Therefore, we request that the applicant identify any Specimen Tree and/or State Record Tree as defined in the Township's Woodlands Ordinance. Where possible, we seek to preserve these trees. We also recommend a full accounting of all proposed tree removal, tree preservation and tree replacement mitigation plan for this project as per the township's ordinance.

We recommend this project strive to minimize tree loss, land disturbances, and all adverse environmental impacts for its duration.

We recommend establishing perimeter landscaping first during each construction phase in order to buffer surrounding areas and maintain viewscapes. We also recommend completing 80 % of the required landscaping, including street trees, for each project phase before beginning the next construction phase.

We note that many landscape planting choices are not native species as required by the Township's Landscape Ordinance. All plantings should be chosen from the Township's approved plant list.

The proposed number of eastern white pine trees will create an undesirable monoculture. We recommend choosing three or four varieties of mixed evergreen species from the town's approved plant list.

A similar monoculture may occur with the proposed street / shade tree selections. We recommend diversifying these plantings so similar species do not occur one after another. The project should alternate species 1,2,3,4 wherever possible. We would be happy to work with the contractor on this as work progresses.

Lastly, we recommend additional plantings along the projects' Northern boundary to create a continuous visual screen.

Lighting - The Township's lighting ordinance states that "Minimal required levels of illumination are to be used in all applications. All lighting shall be designed, selected and installed both to prevent negative impacts caused by misdirected or excessive light and to conserve energy."

The township desires to minimize light pollution and the lighting ordinance requires zero uplight. Therefore, we do not recommend granting a design waiver for full cut-off requirements for any lighting luminaires.

We believe the total number of lighting installations is excessive for the proposed development and recommend reducing this amount, especially type VF1 on poles. Even full cutoff fixtures cause skyglow from reflected and scattered light in direct proportion to the number of fixtures in a given area.

Lastly, the lighting ordinance specifies that LED color temperature for residential applications should be 2700K, and for commercial applications 3500 K or lower. The plan documents appear to indicate 3000K for all three types of luminaires (SD1 and VF1 and VF1-H). We recommend that color temperature 2700 K should be selected if possible.

Ecosystem - We understand there are six stormwater basins proposed for this project; two of which are constructed wetlands, three bioretention and one detention basin. We recommend the applicant establish an Integrated Pest Management plan and incorporate biological controls to mitigate any mosquito issues and diminish the need to use pesticides.

We suggest the following list of native plants be used in and around the basins since they will attract beneficial “mosquito eating” insects and birds:

Terrestrial plants - *Rudbeckia hirta*, *Asclepias incarnate*, *Eupatorium fitulosum*, *Echinacea purpurea*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Liatris spicata*, and *Helenium autumnale*

Aquatic plants - *Sagittaria latifolia*, *Vallisneria americana*, *Nymphaea odorata*, *Equisetum fluviatile*, and *Pontederia cordata*

Flat rocks placed around the basins will provide Dragonflies a place to sun, and strategically placed birdhouses designed for Purple Martins and Tree Swallows will provide nearby homes for these mosquito eating predators.

We also advise the planting of drought tolerant grasses, such as Meyer Zoysia Grass, throughout the development to reduce water usage and diminish the need for fertilizers and their associated pollution problems.

We believe the above measures will benefit this development by providing more enjoyable time outdoors for residents, more picturesque scenery for resident yards, common spaces, and anthropogenic and natural aquatic ecosystems, and lead to healthier residents and a healthier ecosystem.

Climate Change - We believe we must employ every means possible to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. This applies to any new construction. While we would like to see the use of extra building insulation, rooftop solar panels and/or community solar throughout the development, we understand this is not a requirement and would create an added expense for the project. However, the contract does require all buildings to be “solar ready” by including conduit for future solar systems. We also believe the applicant can incorporate light-colored (white) roofing

on all buildings to diminish heat gain without additional cost. We would also like the applicant to consider adding electric car charging stations where appropriate, since electric vehicles will become more dominant in the near future.

Considering this and other affordable housing projects proposed in our community, which will take many years to construct, Vanessa asked about the overall effect on neighbors and the change(s) in technology that may occur over the next ten years, including solar. Nora asked if there is a time limit for this project.

2. **Pennington Adult Living Services**

Block 49, Lot 2; 64 Woosamonsa Road, VRC Zoning District
Minor Subdivision

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. We understand the proposed 6.0 acre lot will not encroach on the stream tributary buffer located on the parent property, and have no other environmental concerns for this subdivision.

3. **Lakeside Liquors & Café**

Block 33, Lot 1.01; 129-131 Route 31 North, SC-1 Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Site Plan with Bulk Variances for bar and restaurant.

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. and have no environmental concerns for this project.

Actions: Jim will prepare and send our review comments via memo to Linda Barbieri to post with the appropriate applications on the Township website.

Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects

1. **Twp Committee Liaison Report** - [Courtney reported that the Township's consultants are telling us that the energy market appears to be more favorable now than it was the first time the Township held its energy aggregation auction. They are completing the paperwork to schedule a new auction in mid-March.](#) Also, the proposed 2021 budget should include money for continued monitoring of the Scotch Rd. Well as we requested.
2. **Planning Board Liaison Report** – Rex reported they are busy with new applications, especially the affordable housing projects.
3. **Zoning Board Report** – Vanessa reported the Princeton Research Duplex proposal was denied. The Buy Rite application is still under discussion while addressing some EC concerns for the project.
4. **EC Members Outreach Articles**

Members agreed to write environmental outreach articles for 2021. Topics will be posted on the Twp web site's issue page. Topics may include: leaf mulching, septic system maintenance (Mike); dark sky, pesticide reduction & chemical fertilizers (Rex); trees (Jim); recycling, plastics (Paul); native plants, native gardens, turf lawns (Andrew); healthy food (Vanessa), responsible gardening (Nora). Lead in drinking water (Ray - already submitted), perhaps arsenic in drinking water (Mike & Twp Health Dept).

Rex and Mike have each completed their articles. We decided the submittal protocol would be to send your article to members for review. Replies shall only go back to the author (i.e. do not reply all). We will discuss the article at our next meeting. Upon approval, the article will be sent to Mark and Courtney for web site and social media (via Twp PR person) posting respectively.

Action: Andrew said he would have his article ready for our March meeting. Other members should work on their article.

New Business

1. Native Display Garden

Andrew informed us he (Twp) applied for two possible project grants. The ground is snow covered now, but Mark and Andrew will meet to mark out and map proposed garden areas asap.

2. Green Team Styrofoam Collection

The Feb 6 event was a huge success with a record amount of styrofoam collected.

Action: Andrew will forward us a related e-mail from Joann Held w/photos.

Announcements & Correspondence

1. We should study the next affordable housing project information (Zaitz parcel behind Shop Rite) for discussion at our next meeting. We will review the proposed stormwater ordinance update in the future.
2. (Reminder from January meeting) Mercer County will hold a 2nd public meeting on Feb 23 at 6:00 pm for further discussion of visions for the Moores Station Quarry site.

Action: Mark suggested that a small group of Twp persons should attend.

- * The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm: Motion – Paul, 2nd Mike; all in favor.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gambino
Secretary