



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

For the regular meeting of
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

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

* The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Nora Sirbaugh.

Statement of Compliance & Roll Call

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

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 February 17, 2021 draft minutes were approved – Motion, Vanessa; 2nd Nora; all in favor.

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

Stream Corridor Permit Application Review

John B. & Frances Caswell; Block 62, Lot 26.02; 326 Pennington-Harbourton Road,
VRC Zoning District; fence.

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. A tributary to Jacob's Creek runs through this property. Jacob's creek is listed by NJDEP as a Category One (C1) stream which requires a 300 foot buffer. The Township Ordinance requires a 150 foot stream buffer. The proposed fence will encroach approximately 100 feet into our stream buffer area. NJDEP has issued a permit by rule for this project stating – the proposed disturbance is located beyond 25 feet from the top of bank, no tree clearing/cutting is proposed, and the fence is not located within a Flood Hazard Area.

Action: We recommended approving the project with the condition that the fence shall be installed no closer than 100 feet from the rear property line, where 50 feet was proposed, and the applicant shall be required to plant ten native woody plants, trees or shrubs, within the stream buffer area. All plants should be chosen from the approved plant list in Section 17-89 of the Township's Landscape Ordinance.

Zoning Board Application Reviews

Case No. 21-01: Deshpande Deck & Patio

Block 78.14, Lot 4; 8 Navesink Drive;
R-5 Zoning District
Bulk Variance; Rear Deck

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. The proposed project will exceed the maximum allowable lot coverage area for properties located in the R-5 zone; where 39 % is proposed, and 35% is the maximum.

Lots exceeding the maximum impervious coverage area have an adverse affect on our community and environment by increasing storm-water run-off and flooding, sedimentation of our streams, and other impacts to water bodies including loss of biodiversity and degradation of water quality. The cumulative effects of multiple approvals are of serious concern.

We understand the applicant proposes to mitigate the excess lot coverage by constructing a rain garden on the property. We request that if the Board approves this application, the applicant shall demonstrate the rain garden design will effectively mitigate the excess lot coverage on site and that a maintenance plan be established so it will function properly into the future.

For the above reasons we do not recommend approving this application unless the excess lot coverage can be effectively mitigated on site into the future.

Case No. 21-02: Double Y Farm Buildings

Block 44, Lot 8; 16 Elm Ridge Road;
VRC Zoning District
Bulk Variance; Two Animal Sheds

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. We understand the proposed sheds will not encroach on a stream tributary that runs through the front of the property. However, the plan shows a proposed fence for the horse shed area in the rear of the property. In order to avoid the necessity of applying for a Township Stream Corridor Permit, this fence should be constructed so that it does not encroach into the 150 foot stream corridor buffer of Stony Brook which borders the rear of the property.

Case No. 21-03: Lynch Addition

Block 93, Lot 34; 105 Nursery Road;
R-100 Zoning District
Bulk Variance; Master Suite Addition

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. The application states that tree removal is required, but none is shown on the plan. So it is not possible to determine if the tree removal would exceed that which is allowable in the Township's Woodlands Ordinance. The site's well and septic locations are also not shown on the plan.

The existing property exceeds the maximum allowable lot coverage area of 15 % for properties located in the R-100 zone. The proposed project will exacerbate this issue by increasing lot coverage to 17.9 %. There was no mitigation proposed for the excess lot coverage.

Lots exceeding the maximum impervious coverage area have an adverse affect on our community and environment by increasing storm-water run-off and flooding, sedimentation of our streams, and other impacts to water bodies including loss of biodiversity and degradation of water quality. The cumulative effects of multiple approvals are of serious concern.

For the above reasons we do not recommend approving this application unless the excess lot coverage can be effectively mitigated on site into the future.

Case No. 21-04: **Waskovitch Driveway Gate**

Block 46, Lot 14; 1 Moorehead Drive;
VRC Zoning District
Bulk Variance; Entrance Gate & Pier

We reviewed and discussed the application together with Mark K. The plan shows three mature trees to be removed between the proposed gate and end of driveway. It is not clear why these trees need to be removed, and we request that these trees be preserved and protected during construction.

Also, all lighting must conform to the Township's Lighting Ordinance.

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

Planning Board Application Review

1. The Collection at Hopewell

Block 85, Lots 4 & 9; Block 86, Lots 32, 33, 34 & 130;
12 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, 1646 Reed Road, 24 & 26 Diverty Road;
IMF-X Zoning District
Preliminary & Final Major Subdivision & Site Plan

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

We understand there are no streams on the property, and the plans show adequate buffers for all wetland areas. The project contains green infrastructure such as bioswales along roadways, rain gardens and porous pavement areas. Although three of the five stormwater basins occur near the southern portion of the project between the gas pipeline and Diverty Road residences, there is minimal green infrastructure shown in this area.

We understand there are five bioretention stormwater basins proposed for this project. 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 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. Sugar Maples are not salt tolerant and should not be used along roadways.

We believe that 141 lighting installations are excessive for the proposed development and recommend reducing this amount. There are only 10 existing street lights on the surrounding roads. The luminaires are not described in detail in the plans. The Township's lighting ordinance specifies that LED color temperature for residential applications should be 2700K. We recommend that color temperature 2700 K should be selected if possible.

The Environmental Impact Statement shows the project has more parking spaces (943) than that which is required (828) for the number of bedrooms in the proposed community. This will result in additional and unnecessary impervious cover. We recommend reducing the number of parking spaces to the minimum required.

Note: we plan to revisit this application for further review at our April meeting and to submit formal recommendations similar to those we stated for the Scotch Road, Hopewell Parc Project.

Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects

1. **Twp Committee Liaison Report** - [Courtney reported that the Township](#) recently introduced the new stormwater ordinance. They also discussed the states' new cannabis law and the need for Hopewell to decide by Aug 21 whether to opt-in or opt-out of permitting related facilities in the township.
2. **Planning Board Liaison Report** – Rex reported they are busy discussing the Hopewell Parc application and the wish to connect the proposed development with hiking/biking trails to nearby Woolsey Park.

Mark mentioned the proposed Great Western bikeway initiative connecting the D&R Canal towpath up through Ingelside Ave. along Washington Crossing-Pennington Rd.
3. **Zoning Board Report** – Vanessa suggested the EC should include wording in our reviews regarding “how to maintain areas to mitigate lot coverage overages”.
4. **EC Members Outreach Articles**

Members agreed to write environmental outreach articles for 2021. Topics will be posted on the Twp web site's EC 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).

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.

Rex's article was recently posted on Twp web site's EC issue page and MercerMe. We discussed combining Mike's leaf mulch article and the towns existing leaf management brochure. An article about arsenic in drinking water (Mike & Twp Health Dept.) will have to wait until the Heath Dept. is less busy.

Andrew distributed his article for review just prior to our meeting.

Actions: Members should review Andrew's article and send any comments only to him. Other members should draft their article.

New Business

1. **Stormwater Control Ordinance Updates**

Mark reviewed the Township's draft stormwater ordinance with us. It does more than meet the minimum requirements established by NJDEP which requires green infrastructure for all new major developments (i.e. > ¼ acre impervious surface or 1 acre disturbance). The requirements use smaller areas and various components to achieve the goal of capturing and infiltrating 100% of stormwater runoff from properties.

The draft ordinance also includes design standards for minor development with requirements written to be fair for the variety of zoned properties located in the township.

We thanked Mark for his work, and agreed to endorse the draft ordinance as written.

Action: Nora plans to attend the April 19 Twp. Committee meeting to officially endorse the ordinance on our behalf.

Announcements & Correspondence

1. Notice of Freshwater Wetlands Application to NJDEP for The Collection at Hopewell Project.
2. Nora informed us that the grant application for the Native Plant Display Garden Project was approved.

* The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm: Motion – Mike, 2nd Paul; all in favor.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gambino
Secretary