



# TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### Approved Minutes

For the regular meeting of  
Tuesday, July 20, 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, Vanessa Sandom, Mike Aucott, Rex Parker, Mark Bean, Jim Gambino, and Paul Kinney

Members absent: Andrew Plunkett, George Kerr,

Also present: Herb Seeburger - Twp Engineer

Kevin Kuchinski – Twp Committee Member

Members of the Public present: Mike Pisauro & Sophie Glovier of the Watershed Institute

#### **Minutes for Approval**

The June 15, 2021 draft minutes were approved – Motion, Jim; 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike; Abstain, Rex; all in favor.

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

#### **Presentation** – Impervious Cover Assessments & Reduction Action Plans

For about one hour, Sophie Glovier & Mike Pisauro of the Watershed Institute discussed the adverse effects of impervious cover within our watershed. Our region has been experiencing increased precipitation and heavier downpours which leads to more flooding and erosion issues. Impervious cover decreases groundwater recharge and creates more stormwater runoff causing increased non-point pollution entering our surface waters. Currently, Hopewell Township has approximately 4.85% impervious cover and is below the 10% limit for an impaired watershed.

Sophie & Mike discussed flaws in our current Tree Protection Ordinance, Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance, and Stormwater Management Ordinance and asked that we try to improve them.

**Actions:** The EC should provide a list of priorities to the Township to help mitigate our impervious cover issues.

Sophie will send the presentation to all members via Nora.

Mike will send a link to an interactive map to Vanessa.

## **Zoning Board Application Reviews**

### **Case No. 21-12: Lovett Generator & LP Tanks**

Block 1, Lot 6; 567 Province Line Road;  
VRC Zoning District  
Setback Variance for new Generator

We reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Herb Seeburger and have no environmental concerns for the proposed project.

### **Case No. 21-13: Schembre Barn**

Block 51, Lot 55.01; 152 Harbourton-Woodsville Road;  
VRC R200 Zoning District  
Setback Variance for New Barn

We reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Herb Seeburger. We understand that constructing a shale drive to the barn will trigger mitigation required by the Township's new stormwater ordinance. Otherwise, we have no environmental concerns for the proposed project.

### **Case No. 21-14: De Solda Pool**

Block 46.03, Lot 12; 107 Pierson Drive;  
R100 Zoning District  
Bulk Variance for in-ground pool

We reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Herb Seeburger.

Note: the total lot area shown on the application does not agree with the lot dimensions given.

We understand the existing property exceeds the allowable impervious 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 27.2 % and will trigger stormwater management for this project.

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.

The calculations shown on the plans for the proposed trench and drywell mitigation do not appear correct. The mitigation should be designed to capture and infiltrate anything above the 15% maximum allowable lot coverage. Additionally, the overflow from the drywell should be directed onto the applicant's property and not the neighboring property as shown on the plans. Also, there are no soil test results to show adequate infiltration of the mitigated stormwater.

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. It is not clear if the proposed drywell will mitigate the excess lot coverage for this property.

If the Board decides to approve this application we recommend that the project must comply with existing stormwater regulations.

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

## **Subcommittee Reports / Discussions / Updates for on-going projects**

1. **Twp Committee Liaison Report** – Kevin reported the township has passed the new stormwater ordinance. Also, there are concerns about trees recently planted along Pennington-Lawrenceville Road by PSEG.

**Action:** Nora and Kevin will meet to look at these trees.

2. **Planning Board Liaison Report** – Rex reported the Township’s ordinance is inconsistent with the Master Plan, saying it does not permit cannabis growing operations and conflicts with the Plan’s goal to promote agriculture in the township. The Planning Board will ask the Twp Committee to change the ordinance to allow growing operations.

Rex also reported that numerous adjustments have been made by the builders of both the Hopewell Parc and The Collection projects as per our comments.

**Action:** Rex asked that we review the current list of trees for these two projects and will send us a link to the lists.

The Planning Board will also begin reviewing the Township Master Plan.

3. **Zoning Board Report** – Vanessa reported that the Zoning Board followed our comments on recent applications they heard.

### 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), stormwater basin naturalization (Mark B).

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 Reba Holley, the Township’s Communications and Outreach Manager, for posting on the Twp website and social media.

We reviewed and approved Nora’s article on responsible gardening.

**Action:** Nora will send her article to Reba for posting.

### 5. **Native Plant Demonstration Garden**

Andrew was not present to give us an update.

### 6. **Carbon Tax**

Mike reported that that the European Union is planning to impose a border tax on carbon related items.

## **New Business**

### 1. **Sourland Conservancy Planting Proposal**

We discussed an e-mail message we received from Laurie Cleveland of the Sourland Conservancy which solicits our help for planting trees to help replace ash trees lost to the emerald ash borer and to help pay for fencing off the planted areas. They would like to create a partnership with the township and help prioritize planting projects.

Vanessa will e-mail her response to the Sourland Conservancy.

Paul suggested that this issue be vetted by both the Township's Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee's.

## 2. Mercer County 4-H Fair

Nora has applied for an EC table at the fair at Howell Living History Farm on July 31 & August 1. She will pick up EC supplies from the municipal building and bring them to the fair. She will also send a doodle poll so members can sign up for a time slot to staff our table. We plan to educate the public about the Spotted Lantern Fly.

**Action:** members are asked to volunteer for a time slot at the fair.

## 3. #5 Plastics

Paul informed us that the Green Team will no longer be able to accept #5 plastics for recycling

**Action:** Paul will ask Mercer County about #5 plastic recycling.

Note – item 2 and 3 above were not listed on our agenda.

## Announcements & Correspondence

1. Notice of Application by Mercer County to NJDEP for Flood Hazard Area and Freshwater Wetlands permits to spray herbicide on invasive Canary Grass along the Stony Brook Trail.

\* The meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm: Motion – Rex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike; all in favor.

Note: we are not planning to meet in August.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Gambino  
Secretary