

Holland Township Environmental Commission Minutes

January 4, 2017 7 PM Meeting

Chairman Keady called the meeting to order. He read the notice satisfying the Open Public Meeting Act. All stood for the pledge of allegiance. All were reminded to turn off their cell phones or put them in silent mode.

Members Present: Jerry Bowers, Henry Gore, Ted Harwick, Mike Keady, Dwight Pederson, Rick Schrack and Secretary Maria Elena Jennette Kozak.

Absent: N/A

Township Committee Liaison: Robert Thurgarland

Let the record show we have a quorum.

Oaths of Office: Township Committee Liaison Robert Thurgarland administered the Oath of Office to Mike Keady and Rick Schrack. Congratulations.

Minutes: A motion was made by Jerry Bowers and seconded by Henry Gore to approve the November 2, 2016 and December 7, 2016, minutes as presented. All present were in favor with the exception of Ted Harwick who abstained for the November minutes and Rick Schrack who abstained from the December minutes. Motion carried.

PennEast Pipeline Update: Nothing new really going on. The Township received answers to the letter submitted to FERC. The PennEast answers were not satisfying. Regarding Crab Apple they said they would have to dig up the road and not burrow thru. Regarding Phillips they said they would tunnel thru. It will still go thru Gravel Hill preserve. The following is part of the document that was sent to the township.

“Route Deviation No. P-1710

Commenters argue that Route Deviation No. P-1710 is not environmentally better than the previous route due to a variety of impacts such as proximity to residences, crossing a land preserve, tree cutting, and crossing steep slopes.²⁴ Route Deviation No. P-1710 is preferable to the previous alternative because it avoids impacting known Green Acres preserve parcels (Gravel Hill and Milford Bluffs) and also avoids a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) encumbered parcel, archeological resource areas, and the Delaware River floodplain. In addition, Route Deviation No. P-1710 has an associated reduction in forest clearing. The collocation through the Gravel Hill Preserve will impact fewer trees due to a shared easement agreement with the utility that this deviation collocates with, falling 100 percent within the utility’s existing maintained ROW.

One commenter more specifically states that the deviation crosses Phillips Road and Crabapple Hill Road—narrow roads on a slope that require tree clearing—which will impact streams, wetlands, and residents and cause flooding.²⁵ To minimize impacts associated with crossing of roads, PennEast will evaluate and prioritize use of conventional bored crossings to the greatest extent practicable where terrain allows for trenchless methodologies. The topography of Phillips Road is flat, while Crabapple Hill Road has sloped topography. The proposed open cut of Crabapple Road is required due to its sloped terrain. All slopes will be properly protected with

New Jersey Best Management Practices (BMPs) (water bars and plugs, erosion control matting, silt fence and sock, etc.).

A commenter points out that Route Deviation No. P-1710 crosses four (4) wooded drainages whereas the previous route would have crossed fewer channels because it was routed through more agricultural fields, but also admits that the deviation would cross flatter terrace land that would be impacted less than if drainages were being crossed.²⁶ The alignment filed in the September 2016 Route Deviations filing impacts an equivalent number of drainages when compared to the prior alternative, and the crossing locations at these drainages are advantageous from an environmental standpoint, as the alignment crosses in areas with less extensive wetland complexes. In addition, PennEast has further reduced ROW widths through the drainages from 75 feet to 60 feet in this area. PennEast will utilize crossing methods that maintain flow and restore to pre-existing contours, and thus any impacts to drainage areas will be localized and temporary in nature. Construction windows will be optimized for times of minimum flow through these drainages.

One landowner filed comments stating that Route Deviation No. P-1710 will impact the privacy of four residential homes including his private residence.²⁷ However, the deviation does not impact the parcel in a manner that would reduce privacy of the landowner. PennEast proposes to maintain a tree buffer between the pipeline and the residential home on this parcel, and provide additional vegetative cover once the operational ROW is established.

Commenters also raise questions and safety issues regarding collocation with an electrical transmission line ROW and crossing of a foreign pipeline.²⁸ Each crossing of an existing utility is made with cooperative agreements between utility owners and PennEast. PennEast's contractors will use safety protocols required by existing utilities, in addition to following all federal and state safety guidelines, and PennEast will design and construct foreign pipeline crossings according to established safety criteria for minimum depth of crossing, marking and signage, and Cathodic protection. Cathodic protection will serve to mitigate impacts from electric transmission lines and foreign pipelines near the Project.

One commenter argues that the Gilbert Lateral tap site in Holland Township is too close to residential property, that there is a steep slope with a Class One (C-1) stream and marshy water recharge area where the valve and housings would be located, and that large trucks cannot cross this land.²⁹ Aboveground appurtenances associated with this site are minimal and will be visually obscured by fencing. In addition, locating the tap site along Philips Road eliminates the need to provide an additional permanent access road to the site, which avoids more extensive visual impacts and other impacts to this area. In addition, PennEast has narrowed workspace width in this area to minimize impacts on the C-1 waterbody. Regarding access by trucks, topography in this area is moderate and not restrictive for construction vehicles. “

The entire document is on file with the Township.

Radon Action Month: The information is educational and has been added to the website.

Sub-Committees:

Stormwater Education – Mike Keady, Rick Schrack and Maria Elena Jennette Kozak as Secretary –nothing new to report. The school giveaway happened in December as scheduled. WWW.njstormwater.org will be added to the website as requested. Secretary Kozak will work on the 2016 report that is also submitted to the Engineer for their 2016 report to the DEP.

Trails – Ted Harwick, Jerry Bowers and Richard Schrack. – A thank you was stated to all who help finalize the DEP grant approval especially to Cathy Miller. Rick Schrack will work on an action item list which will be sent to everyone. Help is needed. The DEP grant is thru Holland Township and we are in charge of the trail portion of the grant. Liaison Thurgarland will reach out to Maser for the site map for the project.

Community Education and Outreach – Jerry Bowers, Dwight Pederson, and Ted Harwick – If you see additional corrections that are needed please send them to Secretary Kozak. The link is as follows: <http://www.hollandtownshipnj.gov/14-ec/46-environmental-commission.html>.

Highlands Conformance – Jerry Bowers (chair), Mike Keady and Henry Gore. The HT Highlands Council subcommittee discussed a new Highlands Planner and the Planning Board appointed Darlene Green of Maser Consulting to the position for 2017.

Shade Tree and Community Forestry Plan Sub-Committee – Henry Gore, Dwight Pederson and Maria Elena Jennette Kozak as secretary. Henry Gore is to work on the annual report that needs to be submitted to the state February 15th. A cover letter will be needed along with page 2 of the report. He is asking for pictures from anyone who has pictures. Chairman Keady said he will help with editing. Henry Gore will also call the state contact with some questions he has about the project. Secretary Kozak sent everyone the summary from the state that shows our standing including who are CORE trained as well as the webinars and seminars attended and credit as such. Secretary Kozak to also include the Proclamation from the Township regarding Arbor Day. More to follow for the next meeting.

As a reminder, grants will become available. They are usually due in February and issued in August. Nothing has been received yet. Based on prior years, there should be 5 grants available. We will need to hire someone and Henry Gore will reach out to Ron Farr for some guidance and input. Henry Gore stated that the grants usually do not require the township to match them. Henry Gore is suggesting that we go thru the township right of ways to see the condition of the trees and determine if any need to be removed. Henry Gore will also reach out to our contact at the state to find out the grant availability. What he is looking to do is an assessment of the trees.

Emerald Ash Borer presentation by the NJ Dept. of Agriculture – Henry Gore tried to reach the contact for three months. Secretary Kozak suggested including the environmental group at the school and seeing if they want to be involved with this project. Jerry Bowers suggested seeing the presentation and recording it to put on the web as a podcast. More discussion took place regarding timing for a presentation. It is a government program and the general feeling was including students was not going to help with educating the public. Henry Gore stated that he feels this is something the board needs to be involved with. It was decided that Henry Gore will work with the contact to have him attend a regular EC meeting. More information to follow.

Public Comment: No comments were expressed.

Planning Board Application update:

“Block 2 Lot 1.02 & Block 4 Lot 1– Mill Road Solar Project LLC – 10 Mill Road – Preliminary and Final Site Plan – Solar Project – Deemed incomplete February 8, 2016. Revised Site Plans Received into our office June 21, 2016 – 45-day completeness deadline July 31, 2016. Board Action needed.” Deemed incomplete. Additional information submitted to the Planning Board with a completeness hearing to take place at the next scheduled meeting of September 12th. Extension granted to October 10, 2016. Additional information submitted for consideration. Extension granted to November 14, 2016 meeting. Deemed Complete. Public Hearing scheduled for January 9, 2017.

Jerry Bowers and Ted Harwick will recuse themselves as they are abutters. Both left the building.

Nothing new was submitted to the Planning Board so nothing new was distributed. Chairman Keady asked the board members for ideas on what he should focus on for the meeting and all believed the concentration should be on the Stormwater ordinance. Henry Gore reviewed the ordinance and he will work with Chairman Keady on being prepared for the Planning Board meeting. Both Chairman Keady and Secretary Kozak explained the Planning Board application process especially regarding the public hearing and how the meeting takes place. All are encouraged and welcome to attend the public meeting.

At 9:10 pm Rick Schrack made a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak

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Environmental Commission Secretary