

Holland Township Environmental Commission Minutes

May 5, 2021 7 PM Meeting

Chairman Keady called the meeting to order. I call to order the May 5, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Holland Township Environmental Commission. Adequate notice of this meeting was given pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act Law by the Environmental Commission Secretary by:

1. Posting such notice on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building.
2. Publishing the notice in the December 10, 2020 edition of the Hunterdon County Democrat
3. And faxing to the Express-Times for informational purposes only.

I remind everyone to please turn off cell phones or put them in silent mode.

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION PUBLIC NOTICE TOWNSHIP OF HOLLAND

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF FORMAT OF REGULAR TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 7:00 PM WEDNESDAY MAY 5, 2021

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.

THE MEETING FORMAT HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 61 CHURCH ROAD, TO TELECONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED BY GOVERNOR MURPHY.

IN LIEU OF IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE, THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCING AND COMMENT DURING THE DESIGNATED PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT.

OFFICIAL ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/97932073190?pwd=YU9YUVZreHhPOTJLcDY4UUE3Z3JvQT09>

Phone: 1 646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 979 3207 3190

Passcode: 085781

All recited the pledge of allegiance. All were reminded to turn off their cell phones or put them in silent mode. Members Present: Regina Barna, Jerry Bowers, Mike Keady, David Harrison, Ray Note (had some technical difficulties during the meeting), Dwight Pederson (Acting Chairmen when Chairman Keady needed assistance), and Township Committee Liaison Dan Bush (arrived 7:25pm), and Secretary Maria Elena Jennette Kozak. Absent: Susan Meacham and Township Committee Alternate Liaison: Ray Krov. Member of the Public: Alex Ambrose, Alan Hunt and Julia Somers

Let the record show we have a quorum.

Minutes: A motion was made by Jerry Bowers and seconded by Mike Keady to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the April 7, 2021 meeting and to approve the minutes as recorded. All present were in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Holland Happenings: The newsletter has been mailed out and will be located on the website.

PennEast Pipeline update: Susan Meacham and Mike Keady –.

Musconetcong Watershed Zoning (MWA) and Planning Analysis (representatives of Highlands Coalition, Musconetcong Watershed Association, Trout Unlimited, ANJEC) - presentation

NJ Waters – How to keep Great – presentation by: Alex Ambrose, Alan Hunt and Julia Somers

It is the hope of the organizations above that the municipalities will create a resolution supporting the protection of more waterways in New Jersey. Currently there are three categories of protection with the DEP:

FN1 – most degradation

C1 – limited degradation

C2 – Degradation allowed

The MWA hired a Hydrogeologist to look at zoning amongst the municipalities bordering the Musconetcong. Holland Township has updated the stream corridor and the flood area but we can still do more for protection. We can obtain some additional funding from the Highlands Council to work on various protection studies. There is a push in New Jersey to identify the recreation values of our waters. A resolution would ask for the process to start by looking into revising the protections of the DEP regarding water. The MWA is working with the DEP. There are issues with the FN1 as there is a definition but not rules in place. The municipality level can be the place to have some effect with resolutions. The question was then asked about the push back for proposing changes. The goal is more to protect the existing qualities of our rivers. It is cheaper to keep the water at its good quality rating than to have to clean it up later. The stream is used for the purpose so let's keep it for the same purpose and protect it. MWA has invested money into protecting water in Holland Township. Let us all protect the investments.

We could look at the Highlands Council Stream Corridor Grant to study the problems. It gives a baseline which you need to plan on how to move forward. It could help locate or identify issues that then let you explore opportunities to fix the issue. There are non-profit partners that could help with the next step. Holland Township is often considered the “poster child” for the Highlands Council as it has been very proactive in using grants to accomplish the tasks outlined. Holland Township is 100% committed to these programs.

Discussion then took place about the designation to take place from Wild and Scenic. Warren County is writing to their communities endorsing plan conformance. Everyone recognizes it needs to be a collaborative effort. We need to make the public aware of the value of rivers and streams. We need to share the facts and encourage the people to go out on our rivers. When they feel it they believe in it. People protect the places they love. Alan Hunt is asking Holland Township to consider a municipal resolution. They need our support. We need to be enthusiastic with this project. All agreed that Holland sells the beauty of what we have and we try to keep Holland as the township we all know and love.

Mayor Bush and Member Harrison want to see the PowerPoint presentation again and Secretary Kozak will work with Alan Hunt for a private showing.

Our guest speakers were thanked for their participation.

Discussion of Environmental Commission Priorities for 2021 – Regina Barna

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION PRIORITIES 2021

DRAFT

KNOWING AND USING OUR TRAILS

GOAL Create a list and promote the use of trails in the Township

Objectives

1. Provide description and introduction to our trail systems using HT website, HT semi-annual publication, and direct emails
2. Seek feedback about trails: Website viewings, Facebook, other?
2. Consider upgrades to Holland Trail: e.g. fields of wildflowers, more definitive path, kiosk information
4. Coordinate with Parks and Recreation on trail use

UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING OUR TREES

Goal Promote an understanding of the kinds and value of our trees

Objectives

1. Submit Tree Survey Grant completion for approval through the NJDEP
2. Disseminate Tree Inventory report using Holland Township website and email mailings
3. Write interpretive statement for public understanding in semi-annual publication

Objectives

1. Continue to identify 12 (?) more trees this year with plaques
2. Inform the community about newly identified trees in the Tree ID Project through semi-annual publication, email dissemination, FB
3. Review and improve Trees Webpage and EC Webpage
4. Promote the use of native trees and plants on township properties
5. Plant Arbor Day tree

PROTECTING AND RESTORING OUR LAND AND WATER

GOAL Coordinate Township Ordinances with Highlands Initiatives

Objective

1. Storm Water Project

David Harrison responded that he saw more people at the trails recently. Regina Barna wants to see the trail connecting the township property and the county property more clearly marked. The kiosk needs to be cleaned up and more markers need to be placed. Dan Bush talked about the Hunterdon County HOPE project. People are encouraged to visit the 19 trails of which Holland is included. It links to Geocaching “Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which participants use a Global Positioning System receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", at specific locations marked by coordinates all over the world.” Mayor Bush kept the explanation simple in that it uses technology and skills to find a location using an app on your phone. If Holland decides to do this then we control everything. We will explore this concept. We need to add protection the township key waterways to the objectives. Mayor Bush shared his opinion that he sees growth coming to Holland Township. David Harrison will add labels to the trees and we will try to get more trees labeled. Secretary Kozak will work with Dwight Pederson and the Google project.

Sub-Committees Reports

Trails – Jerry Bowers, Ray Note and Regina Barna. The subcommittee is working on updating the website.

Community Forestry Plan – Ray Note, David Harrison, and Secretary Kozak

Community Forestry Plan Goals - David Harrison previously outlined the goals for 2021. Keep this in mind. We use this as a basis for keeping us in line of what we plan to do and what has been done to help with the report we will file in February of the following year. It ties to the annual report. These were the goals we established to be completed for the CFP in 2021:

- 1) Arbor Day tree planting – Arbor Day – April 30, 2021 - - Holland Township plants a tree each year in or around the grove. We can still do this, however Liaison Bush suggested that we seek a donation from one of the local businesses to help us replenish the Ash trees that are being removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer. We are working with Georgia Pacific as a sponsor in town for the donation of some trees. Discussions and communication have been established with more information to follow. Secretary Kozak is working with the nursery and the DPW Supervisor to get our yearly tree for planting at the Riegel Ridge Community Center. This tree would go in or around the grove and the other donated trees and go around the grove or in the pine trees.
- 2) Track hours and expenditures for CFP program
- 3) Complete annual training requirements; 8 CEU's – need to see if anything is available for ceu's
- 4) Submit 2 trees or forest related articles to local and regional newspapers and Township website – we do these in the *Holland Happenings*
- 5) Identify and label individual trees on Township property – we do the plaque project yearly
- 6) Plan and develop outreach efforts at Community Day – this is ongoing when we can
- 7) If funding is available, apply for a Township Seedling Giveaway – We signed up for trees this year and will have to pick up on April 22. In the past we have had the Boy Scouts help us. We need to have a plan this year with a rapid bail out if things change due to Covid-19. Maybe partner with another organization. Maybe pay someone from the Clean Communities grant. Chairman Keady to explore this. We have to follow social protocol of the COVID pandemic. If we cannot partner with someone then we need to figure out a way to distribute the trees.
- 8) Investigate alternate sources of funding and possibly create a non-profit Shade Tree Group need to explore this – check with Ron Farr
- 9) Work with EC and create and present a tree related program within the school district – need to explore
- 10) Attain CORE Training for at least one volunteer and/or DPW employee - Mr. Keady and Secretary Kozak are Core Trained. Liaison Bush is also Core Trained. Secretary Kozak needs to follow up with this. It is thru the County but we can also have him listed on the Holland site.
- 11) Apply for CSIP funding to implement a Riparian Buffer Program – Check with Ron Farr – is this something that ties to the Highlands Council grant availability – maybe Stream Corridor

Tree Map update – Secretary Kozak is working in creating a google account. More information to follow.
Highlands Conformance – Jerry Bowers, Mike Keady and Dwight Pederson. – Nothing new to discuss at this time.

Stormwater Education – Mike Keady, Jerry Bowers, Susan Meacham and Maria Elena Jennette Kozak – nothing new at this time.

Community Education and Outreach – Jerry Bowers, Dwight Pederson, and Susan Meacham – Nothing new to report.

The EC webpage is: <http://www.hollandtownshipnj.gov/14-ec/46-environmental-commission.html>. Please send any additions or corrections to Secretary Kozak for posting. The subcommittee will be sending information for Secretary Kozak to work with the webmaster.

Inventory of Fauna and Flora subcommittee - David Harrison, Dwight Pederson, Ray Note – Nothing new to report.

Wild and Scenic – Dwight Pederson – progress is being made. More discussions about the Warehouses that are being built and proposed and the impact that these warehouses are playing on the environment especially with the water courses. The MWA is trying to educate people. Everyone is trying to make the DEP understand what is really happening with the water and how changes are needed for safety controls. The PILOT truck stop on 173 is an example of people getting involved and making changes. Alan Hunt challenged the application filed. Heritage Farm in Franklin could be another example of people stepping up and protecting the lands.

Planning Board Hearing - - Nothing new to report.

Public Comment: No one was present therefore no comment.

Board Comment –

1. David Harrison mentioned that there are 116 acres for sale on Spring Mills Rd for about 1.9 Million. It has threatened species on it. It is a farm with minimal wood acres. He suggests seeing if the state can preserve it. Mayor Bush stated that the family is selling it but that they are trying to find a buyer that would preserve the land.
2. Other members wanted to do a nature hike on the trails. David Harrison suggested after May 20th but is interested in guiding the tour. More information to follow

At 9:10 pm Jerry Bowers made a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak

Environmental Commission Secretary