

Holland Township Environmental Commission Minutes

February 1, 2023 7 PM Meeting

Chairman Keady called the meeting to order, "I call to order the February 1, 2023 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 8, 2022 edition of the Hunterdon County Democrat
3. And faxing to the Express-Times for informational purposes only. "

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, Mike Keady, David Harrison, Davina Lapczynski, Ray Note, Dwight Pederson, Township Committee Liaison Duane Young, and Land Use Administrator (LUA) Maria Elena Jennette Kozak.

Excused Absent: Jerry Bowers, David Harrison, and Township Committee Alternate Liaison Bush

Let the record show we have a quorum.

Minutes: A motion was made by Dwight Pederson and seconded by Davina Lapczynski to approve the minutes of November 2, 2022, December 7, 2022 and January 4, 2023 as presented. All present were in favor of the motion with the exception of Liaison Young who abstained. Motion carried.

2022 Accomplishments and 2023 Goals were distributed. Chairman Keady will work on the final version for LUA Kozak to submit to the Township Committee. This is an annual requirement.

Version 9 was submitted as follows:

Holland Township Environmental Commission Report on the Achievement of Goals for 2022

Community Forestry Management Plan Annual Goals for 2022

Holland Township participates in the Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP), a state program that ensures compliance with the NJ Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, protects the township from liability and assures eligibility for grant programs. The year 2022 was the third year of this five-year plan.

- Plant a tree for Arbor Day

Completed

- Track hours and expenditures for the Community Forestry Program

Completed

- Identify and label individual trees on township properties

Eight new trees were labeled, including three on the new O'Sakame property.

- Continue and improve outreach efforts at community events

Most of the Environmental Commissions outreach to the community during 2022 was through the Holland Township website, our new speaker program, social media and Holland Happenings. The speaker program helped raise community awareness but as yet, has not included a forestry related topic.

- Complete annual training requirements (8 CEU's)

18.5 credits completed for 2022.

- If funding and seedlings are available, apply for a Township Seedling Giveaway
Due to Covid concerns, this was not pursued in 2022. We are hopeful that this program will be resurrected in 2023.
- Submit two tree or forest related articles to local and regional newspapers and to the Holland Township website

Two forest related articles were published in the Holland Happenings and postings were added to the township website.

- Begin implementing the Riparian Planting Project
- Apply for a Community Stewardship Incentive Programs (CSIP) grant to implement a Green Stormwater Management System
- Complete a Forest Inventory of hazard trees if CSIP funding becomes available

Although CSIP funding was not secured, Dept. of Public Works was able to draw on the existing Tree Inventory to assist in identifying and removing hazard trees from publicly owned land.

- Apply for CSIP funding to remove invasive species on township.
No funding was available.

- Adopt the Model Highlands Shade Tree Ordinance

The Highlands Council has not issued a Model Shade Tree Ordinance. We continue to monitor their list of model ordinances and will work on adopting their model ordinance once it is available.

Additional Forestry Goals

In addition to participation in the CFMP above the Environmental Commission has created the following goals:

- Conduct community Arbor Day celebrations, including a tree planting and distribution of tree seedlings to community residents, if the state makes seedlings available
Covid restrictions minimized our ability to conduct community celebrations or tree seedling giveaways, however trees were still planted to memorialize Arbor Day.
- Include additional images of common trees, other pictures and videos on Website
Township website improvements for the Environmental Commission included many additional links to photos of our trees and videos with information about the species.
- Continue identifying trees with signs and QR codes
An additional eight trees were identified and provided with signs that include QR codes. The QR codes link to additional information about the associated tree species.
- Produce new interactive map on Holland Township website showing location of identified Common Trees with tree signs
Major improvements to the tree section of Environmental Resources on the Holland Township website included an update to the map that shows locations of trees with signage.
- Use Tree Inventory and iTree for analysis, and consider a focus on native plants in the purchase of additional trees
With funding from Georgia Pacific, we were able to have several native trees planted on township park properties. Arbor Day trees are also native.
- Design and implement Phase 2 of the Township Tree Inventory
Not completed, but we are exploring availability of funding for a Hazard Tree Assessment.
- Develop a community project to find and identify “Big Trees” in Holland Township
A “challenge” was developed and promoted to find the biggest trees of each of our most common species (there are nearly 40). Though response was light, we were able to find some magnificent specimens with the help of our citizens.

Trails

- Maintain the appearance and utility of signage and information kiosks at Township Trails
Kiosks have been checked periodically, every 4-6 weeks. New material has been inserted, like a laminated map, trail description and connections to other trails.
- Continue efforts to promote public awareness and use of Township Trails, such as National Trails Day, April 23
We determined that National Trails Day was too generic for our needs. Instead, we developed new “Birds” and “Trees” brochures, placing hard copies on the trail for people to have something to look for as they walk. We updated the online Tree Map to include trees with newly mounted tree signs on the trails. Our additional signage on the trees encourages exploration. We have also promoted the Township’s newest trail, O’sakame, with our article in the spring Holland Happenings, with an Arbor Day planting on the site, and with Girl Scout involvement in a native plant garden.
- Produce new interactive map for Holland Township Website showing trail locations and parking areas
Interactive map is now on our Website.
- Add printable Trees and Birds checklists to the Holland Township website
Printable checklists have been added to our website.
- Place Trees and Birds checklists at Holland Park Trail, O’sakame Trail and at local businesses
Checklist holder has been purchased, and both checklists have been placed at Holland Township Park Trail and at a local pet store.
- Plan guided trail trips using the new Trees and Birds checklists
Although no guided trips were conducted this past year, one is planned for June 2023.
- Install larger, laminated trail map at Holland Park Trail
Larger map has been produced, laminated and placed at Holland Park Trail kiosk. Also, an interpretive article was placed on the kiosk, indicating how to connect to the adjacent Musconetcong Mountain Trail.
- Explore improvements to O’sakame Trail – Large Map, Historical Information, Connection with our Native American Lenape inhabitants
All of these items are on hold pending the identification of a funding source. However, two benches have been procured: it needs to be determined where they will be placed. Also, through the efforts of a local Girl Scout troop, a pollinator garden of native plants was installed at the sign. Five red oak trees were planted, including two at the O’sakame sign and three others along the frontage of the road
- Create new Website page for O’sakame Trail
We are awaiting further improvements to the trail, and, in particular, an official trail map.
- Put historic information on Lenape, Gilbert Power Plant on on-site signs and at greater length on the Township website
These items await funding source. We did research two grant proposals, one from ANJEC, and one from Xerces Society. The former was applied for but was not funded. The latter was explored, but determined to be too large a project, both in person-power and in space for the improvements we were considering.
- Write article for Holland Happenings on O’sakame Trail
Article was written for Spring 2022 edition.
- Plan trail trip for O’sakame with historian, Larry LaFevre
This goal awaits improvements to the site.

Stormwater

- Design and launch grant-funded activities to repair riparian conditions and to inventory and assess stormwater detention basins in the Township.

The Township's priority this past year shifted away from these goals and to a focus instead on the state-mandated requirement that the Township upgrade its Stormwater General Permit from its current Tier B level to the more stringent Tier A level. Most of the effort needed to effect this upgrade will be carried out by DPW and Colliers Engineering, with such effort supplemented by EC steps to develop/distribute relevant information to the community via social media. Other stormwater-related achievements included the Township's accumulation—based on at least some EC activities—of the number of points needed to maintain the Township's Tier B Permit, which remains in force until completion of the upgrade to Tier A. Again, most of those activities focused on the development and distribution of stormwater-related information to the community. Other activities included participation by EC members in on-line webinars, and river cleanups (in collaboration with other organizations) of the Delaware and Musconetcong Rivers.

Delaware River Basin Commission

- Alert the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to the hazards associated with the importation of wastewater from Pennsylvania fracking sites sites **Worked with the Township Committee on comments that asked the DRBC to ban the import of all fracking wastewater. In December, the DRBC tightened their rules, but did not impose a total ban. For example, they forbid discharge into water or land in the river basin, but did not ban discharge into the air through evaporation.**

Plastic Bag Legislation

- Support the implementation of new New Jersey plastic bag legislation with public information programs and promotion of reusable bags. State funding has been provided to municipalities through Clean Communities.

The EC had anticipated that implementation of this legislation would generate considerable confusion in and push-back by the community. Instead, the public reacted at least passively—and to a considerable extent, positively—to the ban. That reaction enabled the EC to terminate—as cost-ineffective—EC efforts to research, purchase and distribute reusable bags in the community.

Native Plant Legislation

- Support the implementation of New Jersey Native Plant Legislation
The bill was signed by the Governor in January 2022, placing the “Jersey Native Plant” program within the state’s Department of Agriculture. No signs at nurseries or other support were visible in 2022, and there is nothing about the program on the Department’s website. It appears that the program is now controversial, with a resolution passed by farmers at the annual convention supporting a Jersey Grown label over a Jersey Native designation.
- Consider planting native plant/pollinator gardens on Township property and providing a speaker for outreach into the community **The first presenter in the EC’s new Speaker Program was Randi Eckel, President of the NJ Native Plant Society, who talked about the benefits native plants. The EC is looking at how to fund the planting of a native plant garden.**

Musconetcong River Management Council

- Continue to participate in Musconetcong River Management Council
EC member Dwight Pederson represented Holland at the Musconetcong River Management Council’s bi-monthly meetings. He provided updates to the council on Holland Solar and the Warren Glen paper mill transformer oil spill. Dwight led a Road Salt Monitoring Team responsible for sampling four locations along the lower Musconetcong River, with sodium and

conductivity testing performed after each winter storm in 2022. He also led the Musconetcong River Watchers team responsible for the spring and fall macroinvertebrate study on the lower Musconetcong River, and assisted Musconetcong Watershed Association with installation of a permanent water monitoring station on the Musconetcong River near the Delaware River confluence.

- **Created the Musconetcong “Wild and Scenic” designation article for Holland Happenings.**

Community Education and Outreach

- Continue to provide information for the new Holland Township Facebook page. Facebook postings this year included invitations to the Environmental Commission’s “Speakers Series.”
As part of Community Education, the Environmental Commission, with funding from the Township Committee, embarked on a speaker series to present interesting and current topics that foster an appreciation of our natural community resources. We provided two programs this year: a presentation on native garden pollinators, “If You Plant it They Will Come” in June and, “Inside the Hive” about bees in September.
Flyers were designed and posted at kiosks, Riegel Ridge Community Center, Library, and in stores.
We have promoted the new O’sakame Preserve (with a photo of a tree planting at the site, published by NJ.com on May 2, 2022).
Channel 69 coverage of Delaware River Clean-up was shown on their news channel.

Draft 9 January 26, 2023 Edits Regina Barna, Jerry Bowers

Trails Subcommittee – Jerry Bowers, Ray Note and Regina Barna

O’sakame Preserve needs to be added to the website. We need a map. Dwight Pederson will work on the map after discussing more with David Harrison. There are concerns regarding the trail and steering people to stay on the trail away from the river and the railcars. The walking area is the open field. The farmer plants in the field so we need to keep people around the field. LUA Kozak mentioned that the Kiosk is being installed. Benches were ordered but LUA Kozak will check the status. Once we have a write up about the preserve and the map available then we will put on the website and put in the kiosk. LUA Kozak will send the information to alternate liaison Bush for review, as there was previous mention that the county could review mapping.

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

LUA Kozak sent the 2022 annual report to all for review. The Township Committee meeting of February 7, 2023 agenda for authorization for the mayor to sign the annual report. As soon as Mayor Bush signs the report, LUA Kozak will submit to the state. The deadline is February 15, 2023.

Moving forward, David Harrison (in an email to LUA Kozak) of the following:

These are the 2023 Community Forestry Management Plan goals to which we are committed:

- 1) Arbor Day Tree Planting
- 2) Explore the feasibility of Tree City USA certification
- 3) Track hours and expenditures for Community Forestry Program
- 4) Complete annual training requirements - minimum of 8 CEU's
- 5) Identify and label individual trees on township properties
- 6) Continue and improve outreach efforts at community events
- 7) Submit 2 tree or forest related articles to local and regional newspapers and township website
- 8) If funding is available, apply for a township seedling giveaway

9) Apply for CSIP funds to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan for township owned land and a baseline study and mapping project on conservation easements

10) this is the extra one from 2024 - Reevaluate hazard trees and update the list.

Please submit your 2022 volunteer hour sheet pertaining to the tree project ASAP. LUA Kozak to distribute what Regina Barna submitted for 2022.

LUA Kozak asked everyone to keep track of their hours pertaining to trees for the whole year. Tracking sheets are available upon request. This is important for our annual report. Please keep track. Also, LUA Kozak reminded everyone that if when they participate in a CEU program to please send her any confirmation of attendance so she can work with the state to make sure we receive the proper credits.

Arbor Day/Earth Day - - the actual day is April 28th. The HTEC celebration will be April 29th which is a Saturday. We will have a tree planting. A goal is to get the youth involved with the celebration. Discussions on teaching the youth how to locate a tree and having them help us with the tree label program. The Township Committee is also invited. Pictures are taken. LUA Kozak will work with the Township Committee with tree location and the number of trees the Township will agree to purchase.

Seedling Distribution. The EC submitted the application and committed to the give away of Saturday April 22, 2023 with tree pickup of April 20th. We would need to set up by 8am with distribution being 9am at the Recycling center. The Boy Scouts would like to help with this event as well. Ray Note agreed to pickup the seedlings from the distribution pickup location. We are waiting for the state to confirm availability. Details to follow.

Tree Map update – LUA Kozak is working with Dwight Pederson. The Google account has been created. Dwight Pederson will review this.

Trees of Holland changes to the website. A redesign has been in the works.

Stormwater Education – Mike Keady, Jerry Bowers, Davina Lapczynski and Maria Elena Jennette Kozak –

Nothing new to report.

Highlands Conformance – Jerry Bowers, Mike Keady and Dwight Pederson. –More information will follow as updates are available. Discussion about the EC responsibility took place which circled back to there is nothing to report at this time as the professionals are working on proposals.

Community Education and Outreach – Jerry Bowers, Dwight Pederson, and Regina Barna –

The EC webpage is: <http://www.hollandtownshipnj.gov/bds-committees/environmental-commission>.

Everything will first go to someone on Community Education and Outreach for review and then to Secretary Kozak for distribution to the website or Facebook.

Guest Lecture Series is under Community Education and Outreach

Lecture Series –

Regina Barna presented a report from the January 19, 2023 lecture with presenter Zac Cole discussing the Highlands Trail. It was well attended.

Discussion of the 2023 lecture series took place. There is a possibility that Kathleen Kerwin, the project coordinator, Wildlife Conservation and Management Program, Rutgers New Brunswick will be the October presenter. The subcommittee will update the list and send to LUA Kozak. We need to confirm and book the dates with the Ridge once the schedule is finalized. Then the schedule will go up on the website. Dwight Pederson will work on the flyer for the schedule. Discussion of a link for people to sign up on the website took

place. Discussion on how to steer people to the presenter's website took place. The next lecture is April 26th and advertising needs to take place. The flyer is in the works.

Inventory of Fauna and Flora subcommittee - David Harrison, Dwight Pederson, Ray Note – David Harrison is working on a list of birds and trees etc.

Musconetcong River Management Council – Dwight Pederson
Nothing new to report.

Public Comment: There was no members of the public present.

Board Comment:

- Holland Happenings – submittal deadline is March 8th. Discussions of information included: lecture series, Arbor Day, Seedling distribution, talks of the Highlands, Trees, O'sakame. Regina Barna will work on some information on trees and O'sakame and Mike Keady will work on some of the other information.
- Holland Solar Project – Dwight Pederson asked if an amended site plan application has been submitted. LUA Kozak stated that there has not been an application submitted for the solar project.
- Community Day EC support of an educational series – The EC and Parks and Recreation are being asked to help support an educational series at Community Day 2023. The EC would support the presentation from Tailwise with the series being “Science Heroes: Saving the Earth Together.” The cost from the EC budget would be \$475.00. We would be the sponsors of this event. After some discussion, everyone present was in favor of supporting this event. LUA Kozak to follow up with Director Neglia.
- Holland Township Sustainable Jersey Green Team - - Current status – BRONZE – Holland membership consists of 5 active members. The concept of the Green Team was briefly explained with Liaison Young mentioning the bond and tie to the Environmental Commission.
 - Davina Lapczynski reported that the Green Team is submitting a grant application for a solar project to be on the roof of the Municipal Building. This is a Sustainable Jersey grant. Holland Township is looking for a \$20,000.00 grant to install a 10000 watt roof top system. The goal is to reduce the energy bills by 30% and to also reduce the carbon footprint. The team has been working on this with a February submittal. Mike Keady explained that the grant is technical but there is a component where the grant requires recognition which he feels the EC can promote (like a PR agency). Discussions took place about incorporating one of the early 2024 lecture series into an education piece on solar and have someone from either the BPU, the DEP or Sustainable Jersey do a presentation. More conversations took place about how we can incorporate community involvement and education. The Green Team is requesting that the EC supply them with a letter of endorsement that can be submitted with the grant. Everyone present was very supportive and Chairman Keady is tasked with writing the memo to submit to LUA Kozak for submittal to the Green Team and insertion in the grant. It is also suggested that we incorporate the Green team into the Holland Happenings with some emphasis on the grant if awarded to us. The time line once awarded is 18 months with a deadline of November 29, 2024.

At 9:00 pm Davina Lapczynski made a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak
Environmental Commission Secretary