

Holland Township Environmental Commission Minutes

January 3, 2024 7 PM Meeting

Chairman Keady called the meeting to order, "I call to order the January 3, 2024 Reorganization 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 21, 2023 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, Jerry Bowers, David Harrison, Mike Keady, Dwight Pederson, Township Committee Liaison Duane Young, Township Committee Alternate Liaison Bush and Land Use Administrator (LUA) Maria Elena Jennette Kozak.

Excused Absent: Davina Lapczynski, and Tony Rizzello

Guest: Wes Aber

Let the record show we have a quorum.

Minutes: The reading of the minutes of the November 1, 2023 and December 6, 2023 was tabled.

Old Business:

- List EC members' Accomplishments supporting 2023 EC Goals
Include comments on whether a goal should be dropped, changed, or expanded - - - review. Need to collect substance now so that it can be presented at next Environmental Commission meeting. Under the topic of goals – were the goals realistic or sounded good in 2023 but not good. Jerry Bowers mentioned that he would like the list divided into 2 broad categories with one being actionable items or things do and achieve and then the other being recurring. His example of recurring would be responsibilities, education, pests, ash borer, native plants, mulch. This leaves public education stuff and promoting trails and staying engaged as a committee. Those tasks are not a date certain task but something done all the time as a commission and we owe it to the tax payer to list completed tasks that were accomplished. Regina Barna expressed that her opinion is that this needs a lot more thought and if she is understanding correctly this would be changing the existing format with Jerry Bowers responding yes as he thinks the current format is hard to decipher. He questioned did we achieve something or is it a feel good achievement. Regina Barna wanted to discuss this evening what was accomplished from last years' format. She wants to see what we accomplished and believes we did a lot. We can consider another option moving forward. Mike Keady said he does not want to see twisting things into a slot and likes that everyone worked together. Liaison Bush expressed his opinion that a column of operations and then achievements is easier to follow and that it is something people like to see and then they want to be involved. Liaison Young supported Liaison Bush's opinion and expressed that he believes the public would like to see this. If you do stand-alone accomplishments then the public really notices the extra. Jerry Bowers said by doing this it also makes it easier to put this into the Holland Happenings as it makes sense to break out the over achievements. Dwight Pederson was very much in favor of this concept as he thinks recurring things we do and the tasks that come out of it would be inspiring. Basically everyone thought the columns would be what are specific goals expected to achieve and the other column is from the EC handbook What was accomplished as a group is what is impressive. More discussions took place:

Trails - Goal involved with community tree program and then tell what you did, promote use of township trails both community, county and state trails, we had three trail walks, had a speaker talk of highlands trails

Waterways -Goals attend meetings MWA, signs in township for wild and scenic, wild and scenic talk by Alan Hunt, Delaware wild and scenic designation for Holland Township, river clean ups in Spring and Fall, participation in Flow Together meetings, Lower Delaware recertification, seeking grant to offset the benches and signs at Osakame Park, have presentation from Lower Delaware with discussion on tributaries. Mike Keady thinks we can alert people of issues associated with water and let them know that well testers are in the area and it is in the best interest of anyone to have their water tested, which is a Board of Health issue. Liaison Young suggests connecting people with the BOH and then that removes any responsibility from the holland township EC. The BOH can educate people on wells, ground water, pipes, sewers and septic. MWA did something on taking care of your septic and is willing to do a presentation at holland but likes to use a live septic system.

Wildlife and plants - There was an article in Holland Happenings talking about replacing trees that are dying with native trees and we also had native habitat talk, also have talked about invasives and what to do about them which was in the walk and we have the Seedling give away which encourages native plants

Trails – 2 speakers (1 highlands and 1 walked highlands trail), kiosk updated, benches, rules and regulations (to have a QR code put on the sign), signage of trees on trails, trails are maintained with mowing, new O’sakame Preserve map, QR codes in the kiosk, O’sakame Preserve signs to be installed in 2024 (one sign near bench with oak tree and then another bench installed where the black locust is. The homestead to be area will see the installation of a little sign for the house from cultural concept and the sign that Mr. LaFevre is working on will be installed closer to the homestead sign. A side discussion took place about there being a sign high up looking down the trail but this is a topic for future sign discussions). Liaison Bush suggests everyone go for a walk at the O’sakame Preserve and look at the property and see what looks good for the EC sign. Mike Keady shared that the Shire Road trail has a new sign with an address of being 120 Shire Road with Liaison Bush explaining that all the parks had to have an address for safety reasons. Liaison Bush also shared that Hunterdon County is putting aside one million dollars for improvements for the parks which will help all the parks including Holland Township. Liaison Bush asked everyone to consider possibilities of ways to improve the trails (ideas included adding quarry process and screenings for better walking as well as a fit trail with low impact equipment. There may be an opportunity to expand the O’sakame Preserve trail which would encompass volunteers.

Liaison Bush also disclosed that the Township has had talks with the new company that was Genon regarding a deeded easement to the river which would also require something from the railroad. However, if the railroad is left as unimproved then you do not need anything. Green acres trying to buy railroad property. An ongoing goal of Liaison Bush is to make the railroad a trail. As FYI, it was discussed that Pfoos, similar to Teflon is the new containment that is at the Milford site.

Trees – relating to the Community Forestry Plan yearly goals and Holland did what we were supposed to do. We did a tree give away, kept up with the community forestry plan, Arbor Day planting, the dedication and tree planting in honor of Henry Gore with his family in attendance, lecture series walking tour regarding trees, the tree signs are in place. David Harrison and LUA Kozak will be working on the 2023 annual report for the Community Forestry Plan which everything outlined above ties to the plan. Due date for submittal is February 14 2024. Volunteer hours needed from everyone!

Community education – progress continues to be made. The mailing list for speaker project ONLY was created as well as the 2023 Speaker series. News releases were written and Website updates are a constant along with articles in Holland Happenings. The EC help to create a Clean Water information page on the Township website with the emphasis on stormwater (Tier A requirement). The direct link is: <https://www.hollandtownshipnj.gov/clean-water/stormwater>

New Business:

- Holland Participation in the 2024 New Jersey Tree Recovery program

This is the annual program offering free seedlings. The seedling program is something we have identified in our Community Forestry Plan as a CPSI goal. In 2023 Holland received free seedlings for distribution and also purchased some additional seedlings. Everyone was in favor of doing the program again in 2024 and Liaison Bush requested LUA Kozak to have this on the next TC agenda for approval for the Mayor to sign the seedling request and to budget the Environmental Commission to not exceed \$500.00 for the purchase of additional seedlings. Arbor Day is April 26, 2024 and Earth Day is April 22, 2024. We will coordinate our event to the pickup date scheduled for the closest facility which is the Parsippany area. Regina Barna asked if we could get some better handouts for planting of trees. She does not know how to plant a tree and thinks the information would be helpful for everyone. Liaison Bush to talk with a county representative regarding our lecture series to see if a county representative could do a lecture in Holland Township. The bird presentation would be moved and the planting of the tree presentation would take place in April. LUA Kozak sent Liaison Bush a reminder for him to follow up with investigating if a county representative can do a lecture for Holland Township regarding tree plantings for the April lecture series. Liaison Bush also mentioned that the County Clean Communities would sponsor a kids event/presentation in Holland Township. LUA Kozak to contact the school to discuss interest and report back. Talewise is a company we sponsored last year at community day and we can have them or someone else do something in the school which would also be considered part of our lecture series but only for the school.

Subcommittee:

Trails – Jerry Bowers, Regina Barns and Tony Rizzello – Nothing new to report as discussions took place above with goals.

Community Forestry Management Plan – Tony Rizzello, David Harrison, and Secretary Kozak
CFP 2023 Goals (as outlined by Member Harrison)

- 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.

LUA Kozak requests 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 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.

Tree Labels – Dwight Pederson will continue to work with LUA Kozak to see if revisions are needed for the website.

Member Harrison and LUA Kozak will work together in January to prepare the 2023 annual report of the Community Forestry Plan which is due to the state by February 12, 2024. This will need to be on the TC agenda for authorization for the mayor to sign before submittal. LUA Kozak to work with the clerk's office for a township committee agenda item.

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

Tier B reassignment to Tier A is the focus of the Township. There is nothing new to report as progress is being made with seeking funding. The retention/detention basin list will fall into the stormwater project. This project is engineer driven at this time. More details to follow.

Highlands Conformance – Jerry Bowers, Mike Keady and Dwight Pederson. –More information will follow as updates are available.

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

As a reminder please share with the public that an area to sign up for the lecture series email list is on our website. To be informed about upcoming talks or with speaker ideas, sign-up here

[Speaker Series Email List](https://cities.formstack.com/forms/holland_ec_cont) (https://cities.formstack.com/forms/holland_ec_cont)

The 2024 series is:

January 10 2024 – Know the Bear Facts.

April 24, 2023 – Birds of Holland Township.

The subcommittee is still working on topics for July and September. More discussions will take place.

Inventory of Fauna and Flora (Bio-Diversity)subcommittee - David Harrison, Dwight Pederson, – Nothing new to report. Discussion took place with the EC subcommittee and guest Aber.

Waterway Subcommittee –

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

Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic – Tony Rizzello – Nothing new to report.

Holland Township Sustainable Jersey Green Team – Davina, Mr Keady, Liaison Young –Nothing new to report. Liaison Young to see if the new Clean Water – Stormwater webpage is something that can help Holland Township with the points for Sustainable Jersey.

Liaison Bush and Liaison Young reminded everyone that the Township is working on the 2024 budget. If someone is interested in taking a class outside of the free classes offered for continuing education that we can submit the list to Liaison Bush for consideration. The request needs to be beneficial for the township as a whole. This needs to be presented before the March meeting. Please send to LUA Kozak so she can work with Liaison Young.

Liaison Bush also thanked everyone for all that they do for the Township. Liaison Young continues to share the wonderful job being performed by the EC.

Public Comment: Wes Aber did not have any comments during public comment.

Board Comment: There were no board comments at this time

At 8:40pm Jerry Bowers made a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak

Maria Elena Jennette Kozak
Environmental Commission Secretary