



Bernards Township Environmental Commission



BERNARDS TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES – March 28, 2022 – 7pm

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Debra DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7:02pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act of 1975.

FLAG SALUTE

All those assembled saluted the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jennifer Asay, Debra DeWitt, John Crane, Todd Edelstein, Alice Smyk, John Valeri, Jr., Sarah Wolfson

Absent: Nancy Cook, Corey Fischer, James LaMaire

Also Present: Deirdre Vogel, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve the February 28, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes was made by Todd Edelstein, seconded by John Crane. Jennifer Asay abstained, all others were in favor.

REPORTS & MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

a. **Owen/Little – Public Notice Letter NJDEP**

No comment

DISCUSSION

a. Subcommittee Reports

- i. Application Review: John Crane, Jim LaMaire, Corey Fischer
No comment
- ii. ANJEC email monitoring/important educational webinars: Nancy Cook, Alice Smyk, Todd Edelstein
Todd viewed several online webinars. Todd, Nancy and Alice will meet to discuss some ideas. Todd mentioned an email regarding a \$1500 grant opportunity they may want to consider. Sarah Wolfson was interested in pursuing the grant for purchasing seed, garden tools, etc. The plastic bag ban is set to begin on May 5th.
- iii. Native Pollinator Group/Plant Sale: Debra DeWitt, Sarah Wolfson
Plant sale will begin Friday, April 1, at noon and run through April 22nd. Email was sent requesting volunteers to help with distributing plants at the Ross Farm on April 30th.
- iv. Community Outreach / Education: Debra DeWitt, Nancy Cook



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Debra posted lists of invasive species and recirculated a flyer on the spotted lantern fly. Ways to aid in eradication of the spotted lantern fly were discussed. Sarah Wolfson spoke to a watershed ambassador regarding removal of spotted lantern fly egg masses. Debra will reach out to Ryan Wallace in Public Works to enlist the help of the park employees to identify areas with egg masses. Jennifer Asay suggested involving scout troops. Debra will investigate organizations participating in Charter Day that might have space for a spotted lantern fly display.

- v. Guerilla Gardening – Sarah Wolfson
Sarah mentioned the entrance to Pleasant Valley Park as a possible location for planting.
- vi. AmeriCorps Watershed Project – The Environmental Commission will not be participating in Charter Day.

NEW BUSINESS

John Valeri, Jr. recused himself from the meeting at 7:30pm

a. Verizon – ZB 22-002 – 300 N. Maple Ave – Guard House

The Environmental Commission notes the presence of freshwater wetlands, wetland buffers, riparian buffers and streams/surface water body on the subject property. Additionally, the property contains a wetlands conservation easement. The Environmental Commission recommends the Board require a new NJDEP approved Letter of Interpretation (LOI) prior to application approval and suggests our Bernards Township professionals review what NJDEP permits are necessary (Wetlands Permit GP 10 B, Wetlands Individual Permit, Stream Encroachment Permit). The Commission would also like the Board to examine the Zone 2 township riparian buffer.

Best management practices to protect these sensitive ecological areas should be implemented during the site work (sediment and erosion controls – extra soil erosion measures should be taken above the standard) and post-construction (organic lawn care, protect and preserve natural soil, vegetation, and grading in buffer zones and within the stream).

The Environmental Commission notes that due to the site and surrounding topography, storm water best management practices should be given extra consideration during site work and as part of the final site grading and restoration. In addition, implementation of best management practices to preserve and protect trees during the site work should be considered.

The Environmental Commission notes additional impervious coverage of 1,165 sf, above the 1,000 sf required per the township ordinance, thereby requiring a stormwater recharge plan. Site drainage in general is a concern due to the existing characteristics of the property.



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The Environmental Commission notes the tree removal and replacement plan, shown as 6 trees removed, 14 required replacements and either 6 or 7 proposed (need clarification as it's different on different plans). The Commission would like the applicant to be queried as to why the tree replacement requirement cannot be met and if the Board is satisfied with the answer, the applicant should be required to contribute to the Township Tree Fund for any trees they do not plant.

Motion by Sarah Wolfson, seconded by Todd Edelstein. All in favor, motion carried.

John Valeri, Jr. returned to the meeting at 7:45

b. Silver Living LLC - ZB 22-004 – 14 N. Maple Ave – Construct a new single-family dwelling

As with previous plans submitted by the applicant, the Environmental Commission notes the existing lot coverage exceeds the maximum amount. Increased impervious coverage increases the volume (quantity) of stormwater runoff, which can contribute to local and potentially area wide flooding. Site drainage is still a concern with this application, therefore features to promote the recharge of stormwater from the roof leaders should be considered. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Infrastructure website is a good reference for “green” stormwater management practices for homeowners. (<http://www.nju.gov/dep/gi/>)

Due to the age of the existing dwelling, the Environmental Commission would like the applicant to be aware of the potential for in-ground tanks, lead paint and asbestos. Proper precautions should be taken during demolition.

As with previous plans submitted, the Environmental Commission notes the absence of a tree removal and replacement plan. (It appears as if 10 trees are being removed.) Long term tree survivability should be the goal of any tree replacement plan and native hardwood species should be selected. The Commission recommends the applicant be required to contribute to the Township Tree Fund if they cannot meet the tree replacement requirements, with a satisfactory explanation as to why.

Motion by Alice Smyk, seconded by Todd Edelstein. All in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public present.

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

Todd Edelstein discussed the Natural Resources Inventory with David Schley who confirmed it is the Environmental Commission's responsibility to update it every 10 years. John Crane will discuss the need for the NRI with Dave Banish. Jennifer Asay shared her interest in having the Commission help in the promotion of organizations that collect used clothing for redistribution.



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Sarah Wolfson commented that the Raritan Headwaters has a program offering assistance in setting up bird boxes near transmission lines for kestrels once an area is identified. Debra DeWitt will see who owns the property on Somerville Road with power lines. John Valeri, Jr. mentioned that St. James is collecting reusable grocery bags.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. Motion by Jennifer Asay, seconded by John Valeri, Jr. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre Vogel, Meeting Secretary



Bernards Township Environmental Commission

TO: Zoning Board Chairperson and Members
FROM: Deb Dewitt, Chairperson
Bernards Township Environmental Commission
DATE: March 30, 2022
SUBJECT: Applications Review

The Environmental Commission reviewed these applications at their **March 28, 2022**, meeting and forwards the following comments:

Verizon – ZB22-002 – 300 North Maple Avenue

The Environmental Commission notes the presence of freshwater wetlands, wetland buffers, riparian buffers and streams/surface water body on the subject property. Additionally, the property contains a wetlands conservation easement.

The Environmental Commission recommends the Board require a new NJDEP approved Letter of Interpretation (LOI) prior to application approval and suggests our Bernards Township professionals review what NJDEP permits are necessary (Wetlands Permit GP 10 B and Individual Permit, Stream Encroachment Permit). The Commission would also like the Board to examine the Zone 2 township riparian buffer.

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Silver Living LLC – ZB22-004 – 14 North Maple Avenue

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Cc: David Schley, Township Planner
Cyndi Kiefer, Secretary; for distribution to BOA members