

West Deptford Environmental Commission
Minutes
21 April 2014

Present: Dave Sileo, Dave Keller, Ed Komczyk, Carl Ford, Bob Waller, Miriam Reichenbach, and John Keuler.

Public: Gina Carola and Tom Zander

Special Appearance: Mayor Chintall

Absent: Ernest Kraus

Call to Order: Dave Sileo called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Swear In: Mayor Chintall swore in new member Carl Ford and introduced new Township Committee Liaison John Keuler.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes amended by Dave Keller. Carl Ford moved and Dave Sileo seconded the motion to accept the minutes as amended by Dave Keller..

Point of Information: At future meetings, members making reports will present the written highlights of their reports if they are to be present in the minutes. If the member is simply thinking aloud, brain storming ruminating, etc. that member should indicate that this information need not be included in the minutes or request to be off the record.

Introduction: Ed Komczyk introduced Tom Zander, a life-time resident of West Deptford who was cited by the Township for his work in implementing a clean-up of the riverbank at Riverwinds. Ed gave some background about Tom's activities in the area and thanked him for his efforts to improve the environment.

Special Guest: Alex McCartney of the Community Forestry Program spoke extensively about Shade Tree and Environmental Commissions and their respective duties, and how they might merge some of their responsibilities. He also talked about the liability, the continuing education credits, the annual reports, the benefits of shade trees in communities, etc. Alex distributed brochures and an application to the Commission members. He answered questions from members before taking his leave.

Old Business

Earth Day: The group discussed the needs for Saturday's four site projects. The most pressing need is volunteers. We have a commitment for seeds and plantings to go in the DRHorton site; we have a promise of trash and recycle bags; recycle cans at key points; and large recycle totes at The Point. We are waiting to hear from Heritages about donating snacks for volunteers.

There is \$3,200 in the budget for the Commission. This money was donated to the Commission by Solvay, Coim, Johnson Mathey and DRHorton.

We had additional discussion regarding compost, adding John Keuler to the ANJEC list, future reports from our representative to the Planning Board, and disseminating our flyer to the department heads throughout the township.

At 8:05 p.m. Dave Sileo had to leave.

ERI Sub-committee Report: Ed explained that our ERI is seriously out of date and that we must update it. We have been working on this project for a year and we now need the money to complete the project. The DVRPC originated the template now used for many ERIs, and because of our geographical location in the state, West Deptford is entitled to a significant discount if we choose DVRPC to do our ERI. The Mayor reminded us that even if we have a price below \$17,500 (the threshold for mandatory bidding) for the ERI, we will need to procure multiple bids. Mr. Chintall also told us that since the budgeting process is not yet complete, he cannot commit any dollar figure to the work of the Commission. Ed Komczyk pointed out that we might be able to obtain some funding from local industry and Dave Keller pointed out that since this is a prolonged project, we might spread the cost over two (2) years. Carl Ford noted that the DVRPC has completed multiple ERI projects through Rutgers University.

We can expect additional details about needed money and potential vendors after the township budget is settled.

Solvay Updates: We had extensive discourse about the township meeting and the DEPs responses to questions from local citizens. The Mayor remarked that the DEP must be aggressive in testing private wells in the community. Dave Keller had two (2) concerns: 1) will we have enough water to serve the needs of the community if additional wells should be shut down? Answer: Yes, we have plenty of water. If necessary, we can purchase additional water from American Water; 2) we should not use the terms PFC, PFNA, PFNO, etc. interchangeably. Also, since there is no MCL coming forth in the near future, the interim ground water standard will be used as the basis for remediation.

Geiger Property: Ed reported that we have reached the point where the township must make a decision as to whether or not it wishes to acquire this property. Ms. Winters of the Humane Society did a walking inspection of the grounds and reported that they are free of dumped materials. Brandon Umba, the acting township administrator, called Ed and told him about a call from Woodbury expressing an interest in the old PolyRes site. If Woodbury were to take over the old site, possibly for baseball fields, then there might be parking available for people who wish to walk the Geiger property. If this becomes the case, then there is cause to put trails in the property so the public can better enjoy the space.

Adopt a Park: no report. The Mayor expressed great enthusiasm for this program and told us he has a plan (under the purview of Recreation) but there has not been any movement on the part of the people delegated to undertake the necessary activities. We all hope that, collectively, civic groups can adopt ball parks, roadsides, open areas, etc, and agree to police them for trash, recyclables, etc. For example, look at the adopt-a-road project along the A.C. Expressway.

Township "No Mow" Areas: Dave Keller reminded us that if we plant wildflowers and other plants in detention basin areas the township can save money in mowing, gas, man power, etc. and provide a more aesthetic environment. Carl Ford explained, once again, that the "Do Not Mow" areas in Riverwinds are still being cut down and that the "Do Not Mow" sign is gone. Brandon Umba, who stopped in to our meeting, indicated that he was unfamiliar with the area. Dave Keller asked if we could have a list of areas in the township which the township regularly mows. Perhaps we can indicate those places which need to be posted as "Do Not Mow" areas. Brandon agreed to provide a list of those places.

Grant Update: DRHorton will buy \$500 of supplies for planting (an area of about 1/8 acre) on Saturday.

Local Ordinances: We are looking for two (2) alternates to be appointed to the commission. The current ordinance needs to be modified in order for this to occur. The Mayor suggested that we have two (2) names in the ready. Brandon Umba suggested that we look at the whole ordinance and make all the changes we might require, rather than doing them piece meal.

Public Comment: Gina Carola told us about the Clean Communities grants from the state. Brandon reminded us that the township does apply for and receive these grants. Tom Zander stated that both the boy and the girl scouts helped with the riverfront clean-up he implemented. Dave Keller told him we would reach out to the girl scouts.

New Business

Chairperson Report: no report (chairperson not present).

Planning Board: Bob Waller told us about the progress with the high school courtyard . The old courtyard (20-25 years old) is cleaned out and now needs some guidance and expertise in redoing the space. This has to be after-school time.

Vice-Chair Report: No report on a Strawberry Vale management plan; however, we need an action plan for areas like this. Dave is looking for input from the commission on how to manage areas of interest. Bob Waller suggested that we solicit suggestions from our volunteers on Saturday.

Dave Keller explained to the group that he observed people whose properties bordered Strawberry Vale were encroaching on the preserved space by extending their back yards into the Vale space with fire pits, volleyball courts, etc. There was additional conversation about mowing public spaces, how much to mow, what are the guidelines for mowing, etc. The Mayor asked Brandon Umba to check with the Chief about the line of sight at the Parkville Station/Jessup Road intersection. Mr. Ford indicated that there are evolving guidelines regarding mowing such areas. Dave K. indicated that proper mowing guidelines would be a cost savings to the township; however, we need an actual plan, on paper, to ensure that the township adheres to guidelines in the future.

For the Good of the Order: Ed asked that at all future meetings members come prepared with agendas, minutes, writing utensils, etc. Additionally, he requested that we introduce ourselves to our newest commission member, John Keuler. We complied with Ed's request.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25 p.m. Bob Waller moved and Ed Komczyk seconded that we adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Reichenbach, secretary