

West Deptford Environmental Commission
Minutes
19 May 2014

Present: Dave Keller, Ed Komczyk, Carl Ford, Ernie Kraus, Miriam Reichenbach, and John Keuler.

Public: Gina Carola

Absent: Dave Sileo, Bob Waller

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

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve minutes by Carl Ford, seconded by Ed Komczyk. Motion passed; one abstention.

Secretary's Report: report on Earth Day activities is attached.

Public Comment: open for comment -- moved by Ed Komczyk, seconded by Carl Ford. No public comment. Motion to close by Ed, seconded by Carl.

Old Business:

Geiger Property: Ed Komczyk read a letter addressed to Brandon Umba, township administrator; Ray Chintall, the mayor; and John Keuler, committeeman regarding the Geiger property. In summary, the letter asks that the township take a position to either accept or reject the offer to the twp. of the piece of property. Our concerns have been addressed by the twp.'s solicitor, and a member of the SJLWT. We owe the Geiger family a response to their offer and we are asking the twp. to take action – one way or the other.

There was extensive discussion regarding the pros and cons of the twp. taking on the property. Ed motioned and Ernie seconded that we send the letter to the twp. The motion passed 4 to 1 with Dave Keller casting the dissenting vote.

ERI Update: Ed Komczyk read a letter addressed to Brandon Umba, township administrator; Ray Chintall, the mayor; and John Keuler, committeeman regarding the need to move forward on selecting a company to complete the WD twp. ERI. Ed's letter recommends that we move forward with the proposal from the DVRPC as they are highly qualified, well known for work in this field and offering a discounted price because of our location. John Keuler reported that there is a \$6000 line item in the upcoming budget for the coming year. We should know by early June if the money remains in the budget, it is possible to pay the provider of the ERI in two separate years as it will take more than a year to complete the study. There was extensive discussion of the process.

Ed moved and Carl seconded a motion to send the letter to the twp.

Dave Keller reported that we already have a motion to move forward with an RFP; there are other contractors out there. He further contends that there is no need to send a letter. When there is money in the budget, then we can send out an RFP.

Ernie reminded the group that there are other organizations out there that can complete this task. He also reminded the group that we need "boots on the ground" not just data miners to complete the ERI.

Ed asked if our letter could request the twp. to send out an RFP. The answer appears to be that we need money committed in the budget before that is possible.

Dave Keller stated that we haven't done a thorough search for providers. He also stated that Ed has "a bias and that is inappropriate." He continued by stating that just because Ed has "friends on the DVRPC" is no reason to go with that organization.

Carl stated that he is in favor of going with the DVRPC because he doesn't know much about any other organization.

Dave wants the commission to "do its due diligence".

Ultimately, Carl withdrew his second on the motion to send the letter and the motion died.

Ed said he would put together the components we are looking for in an ERI so that they are ready when it is time to send out an RFP.

Adopt-a-Park: no report.

Do Not Mow Areas: The commission would like a list of areas the twp. mows. Carl told us the suggested guideline is to mow 10 ' back from the traffic lanes. Then the next area (back from the road) is mowed at a higher level; and areas further back are mowed only once a year. Ernie told the group that mowing stops the intrusion of certain animals. Carl reported that studies indicate that not mowing is not the cause of animal related accidents. Ernie asked what the state does, what are the state guidelines? Dave said we needed to examine some "best practices". Carl will look into "best practices" for the next meeting. In addition, Dave informed us that the mayor wants a line of sight on certain properties.

The mayor will talk with the chief of police about the needed sight lines at Strawberry Vale. Carl reminded the group that sometimes there is a need for non-mowed areas to exist and that they should be encouraged as habitat for plants and animals. Ernie pointed out that public safety and line of sight at Strawberry Vale should be of concern. Dave reminded us that not all Do Not Mow areas are along roadways. We need to have a list of Do Not Mow areas from the twp.

Funding Grants: Dave does not have a proposal ready for submission to the NJ Forestry program just yet

Local Ordinances: no report

Public Comment: Ed motioned and Ernie seconded a motion to open the forum for public comment. Gina Carola asked what Solvay is doing regarding the testing of the water in private wells. John explained that the private wells will be tested and that Solvay/twp. will distribute bottled water to homeowners until such time as the results of the testing are completed and returned to the twp. Ed clarified that there is information from Solvay stating who will do the testing (Integral Consulting, an independent DEP approved contractor) and when the testing will occur. Twp. water is not an issue as it is tested quarterly for safety reminded Ernie.

Ernie moved and Carl seconded a motion to close public comment.

Chairperson's Report: no report

Vice-chair's Report: Dave stated that he has not had time to get together recommendations for the Strawberry Vale management plan. He expects to have the plan ready for the next meeting. John said he would like to take a walk through the Vale area, and Ed immediately proposed that interested members of the committee and perhaps Carl Anderson, Mike Hogan, Emile Davito and other local experts would like to schedule a time to walk the area and get a little nature lecture.

Dave plans to include in his recommendations for the Vale:

- homes encroaching on Vale property
- trail system
- watch what should/should not be mowed

For the Good of the Order: Ed asked about the outfit that wishes to build a recycling plant on about 20 acres of land off XXXXX road. John explained to the group that the company which recycles anti-freeze has a need to relocate. Currently, they are in need of a place to store equipment until they locate a new operating space. The zoning board has approved a one-year variance (with optional 2 year extension) for temporary storage. Ernie reminded us that the company requires a performance bond and John stated that the company still has a long way to go before anything happens. Ed asked that Dave Sileo enroll both Carl Ford and John Keuler in ANJEC as soon as possible.

Ed made a recommendation that we ask ANJEC to provide a training session in reading site plans. The whole Commission might benefit from this training.

Also, Ed reminded us that we need a financial report at each meeting. We need to know how much money is in the budget, how much is spent, and on what. Ernie will be happy to give this report each month. John will find out who has the information for a financial report.

Miriam reported that she had attended the viewing of a movie regarding fracking and a panel discussion that followed. She shared information gathered at the meeting with the members of the Commission. In particular, there is concern regarding the disposal of the waste water created by the fracking practice. There was discussion on both sides of the issue.

Public Comment: Ernie moved and Ed seconded a motion to open the floor to public comment. Gina Carola commented that waste water (referring to fracking) can be kept clean, but big companies are exempt from many regulations. Ed moved and Ernie seconded a motion to close public comment.

Adjourn: the Commission adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Carl Ford shared the video "Mowing to Meadows" with the attendees.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Reichenbach, secretary