

West Deptford Environmental Commission
Minutes
22 January 2015

Present: Dave Sileo, Ed Komczyk, Carl Ford, Miriam Reichenbach, Ken Miller, Eric Agren, Joe Rhyner and Mayor Denice DiCarlo

Swearing in of New Members: Joe Rhyner and Ken Miller were duly sworn. Eric Agren, Ken Miller, Joe Rhyner and Denice DiCarlo all shared their backgrounds and goals for membership on the Commission. Meeting notice was placed in the newspapers.

Call to Order: Dave called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Secretary's Report: The minutes will be changed to read "Carl Ford" not "Carl Miller" as member. Minutes of the November meeting were approved with 3 abstentions (new members).

Nominations: President – Dave Sileo – voted in by acclamation. Vice-President – Joe Rhyner. Ed nominated and Eric seconded the motion; unanimous vote. Secretary – Miriam Reichenbach. Dave nominated and Joe seconded; unanimous vote.

Adoption of Regular Meeting Dates: 3rd Monday of the month at Riverwinds. Miriam moved and Carl seconded. Unanimous vote.

Old Business:

ERI Update: Ed reminded us that this is the keystone project for this Commission. Our last ERI was done in 1980. There is a legal connection between the ERI, the Twp Planning Board and the Twp leadership. Denice explained that the Twp Master Plan has to be updated (at an approximate cost of \$40,000). Joe reminded us that a new ERI must feed into the Master Plan. Both Dave and Ed reiterated that the ERI must be completed before the Twp can update its Master Plan. There was extensive discussion regarding ERIs, uses, costs, etc. We need to move this ERI forward. When is the Master Plan due? What about the cost/viability of hiring a master plan company to do both Master and ERI? Denice wishes to confirm what is included in the Twp plan and determine if we want/need the complete ERI project. Ken will join Ed on the ERI sub-committee.

ESRI: This is a mapping program that could be useful to parks and rec, trash collection, etc.

Do Not Mow: Carl said there are no new developments. However, identifying "do not mow" areas could be included in the ERI. Dave talked about local water basins – which are supposed to hold water and which should drain water? We should look at Checkpoint as an example of work done well. Before determining whether or not a basin needs work, look at initial design and purpose. **Dave will examine local meadows and basins.**

Home Owners Association: Can Twp rules supersede Association rules? ie. use of clotheslines, planting vegetable gardens, etc. Some local associations do not allow rain barrel water collection. There was extensive conversation about this topic.

Site Planning: ANJEC charges \$250 to come out for workshop. Ed spoke about the workshop he and Miriam attended and its value. Our members should be trained to look at site plans and note potential problems. Miriam moved and Joe seconded a motion to schedule an ANJEC workshop to learn site plan reading at a cost of up to \$300.00; to be scheduled as soon as possible. Denice asked about space requirements. We can find the space with no difficulty. Motion passed unanimously. **Dave will call ANJEC and set a date.**

Shade Tree Projects: There was extensive conversation about combining the shade tree and environmental commissions and the decision was not to pursue this. Denice asked do we have a shade tree commission. Does it meet? What does it do? **She and Dave will meet and talk about this issue.** The Mayor mentioned that at "The Grande", a tree was planted on every front lawn as part of the builder's plan. Homeowners have begun cutting these trees down. Ken told the group that there is a "sudden oak death" blight in the area. It is possible to watch a tree over the period of just a few months.

Earth Day Project: We are planning a rain barrel construction project directed toward families and home use. We will get the barrels for free, and we will create stations for assembling and decorating the barrels. We estimate the cost to be \$18 to \$20 for equipment to make the rain barrels useful at home. Apparently, there is extensive interest from the school and business communities in becoming involved. Additionally, we hope Dave Keller and his students will be an integral part of this project. Rutgers offers a train-the-trainer program which might be helpful. Denice asked if this might be an on-going project working with just a few families at a time. Someone asked about transporting the barrels from site to home. Joe offered that we might build the barrels in advance and just decorate on Earth Day. It might be possible to find some volunteers from GCIT who would teach local families how to maintain the barrels, once installed. Joe moved and Dave seconded that we celebrate Earth Day on 18 April. Passed unanimously. Perhaps Riverwinds would collect rainwater in barrels and use it to water plants/flowers on location.

Budget: Ed nominated Ken Miller and Dave seconded to elect Ken as “keeper of the budget”. Passed unanimously.

New Business

School Outreach: Dave and Bob Waller were working with the high school; now Dave is working with a teacher to reactivate a garden program. Denice suggested we might begin a scholarship program built around the environmental/garden idea. Eric offered that Rutgers volunteers will assist in outreach to schools.

ANJEC: Carl moved and Ed seconded that we renew our membership in ANJEC. Passed unanimously.

Alternate by Ordinance: Dave requested that the mayor look at altering the rules to allow alternates to this commission. While examining the appointment of alternates, it might be appropriate to examine attendance at meetings and how absence is to be handled. Much of the information we need is available on the ANJEC website and/or in the Twp code. **We will look into what we need and what we need to modify and get the information to Denice by 1 March 2015.**

Website: Requires updating and needs funds to pay for site license. Dave would like a map of West Deptford that indicates its “green assets”. For \$23 a year membership, we can utilize greenmap.org to see our current circumstance.

For the Good of the Order

Dave will present at the CAP meeting on 25 February, 2015. Carl asked about the bald eagles’ nest on Riverwinds Drive. Dave reminded us that Joe Augustine, the community planner, would like to present at a future meeting. And, Joe Traum will be presenting to us in the near future.

Adjourn

Ed moved and Joe seconded that we adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.