

MINUTES
HOPE TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION and GREEN TEAM
MAY 20, 2014

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mike Taylor

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

The secretary read the "Open Public Meetings Act"
Under the provisions of the "Open Public Meetings Act", adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing notice in the "Star Gazette" and by posting notices in the Hope Post Office and on the Township Bulletin Board all on February 14, 2014.

Present at this meeting were: Chairman, Mike Taylor, Vice Chair, Monica Sobon and member, Jennifer Wallace. Absent were members: Ellen Benoit, Nancy Chambellan, Cathie LaBar, John Lucas, Betsy Peterson, and Chris Rusin.

MINUTES The minutes of the meeting of April 15, 2014 have been distributed to the members prior to this meeting. Approval of the minutes has been tabled until the next monthly meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Present at this meeting were: Elizabeth Zellers, Lucy Peters and Melissa Lifrak, 4th grade students at the Hope Township School, along with their teacher, Mrs. Leanne Markus and several parents. Taylor welcomed the students and complimented them on their project which was presented, along with Taylor's student's projects, at Seton Hall University. At this time, Taylor asked the students to present their project to the commission members.

Each of the students took a turn explaining that the project was identification and protection of wetlands. They used their computer, maps and drawings (including a brochure and posters that they created) to identify the wetland area that they located on their school property, how that area is being treated now and suggested ways of improving and preserving that area. The students noted that the wetlands lie in the area of the back soccer field, behind the benches. The students reported that cans and plastic bottles have ended up back in that area after games and practices. They indicated that they would like to be able to put 1 recycling and 1 trash can in that area along with some signage to make students, and parents, aware of the wetlands area and encouraging them to use the containers. The students have offered to empty the containers once a week on Mondays.

Another idea that the students have considered and mentioned is the development of a butterfly garden in that area so that butterflies could pollinate and create more flowers in that area. They thought that a small sign indicating the butterfly garden would make people even more aware of the wetlands area.

Taylor explained to the students that the Hope Environmental Commission and Green Team have recently become certified, at the Bronze level, as a Sustainable Jersey Community. He also explained that Hope is only the second of the small towns in Warren County to become certified. He suggested that the students might want to work with this commission as a Jr. Green Team. He thought that perhaps we could work together to get grant money for certain projects.

Taylor then suggested that the students consider what kinds of signage they would like to see in their wetlands area: wood; plastic wood; metal; perhaps plexiglass that would accommodate and protect different signs made by students at different times, but definitely something that would hold up to the weather. Once the students decided what they wanted, Taylor suggested that the Environmental Commission might be able to find grant money to have the signs created.

At this point, Mrs. Markus thanked the Environmental Commission for sharing their opportunity to obtain free recycling and trash containers. She and the students picked out two that they would like to use in that wetlands area. The secretary noted that the order would be placed the following day and she would indicate the containers that the students requested as a priority.

Taylor thanked the students, their teacher and parents for attending the meeting and told the students that with each presentation, they get better and better at it.

After the students had left the meeting, a brief discussion took place about the name and date for our next green fair. Sobon asked everyone to give some consideration to what the fair should be called and whether the same weekend in 2015 would work for everyone. She noted once we got those two things nailed down, we could begin to make plans and approach other townships and organizations. It was also suggested that we try to get the school on board for next year by approaching them over the summer when the teachers are having their curriculum meetings. Wallace suggested that Sobon touch base with Stacy Brown.

The Environmental Commission members present at this meeting quickly reviewed the application before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for Mark Malick on Mt. Hermon Rd. The application is for approval to put up a barn on the back of his property that would exceed the allowable height for an accessory structure. No one had any questions or concerns about that application, it would not be in view from the road, did not appear to have any impact in any environmental way and the applicant noted on his application that he was considering putting solar panels on the roof of the structure so therefore would have to remove fewer trees in order to do that.

ADJOURNMENT There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Gabel, secretary