

Minutes of the Parks & Environment Advisory Board
Meeting September 7th , 2016 at the Canale Training Center

In attendance:

Officers Present - Michael Hogan – Chairman, Richard Colby – Vice Chairman

Members Present - Ken Sooy, Jill Miles, Elmer Ripley, Steve Fiedler, James Galvin, Bill Reinert

Members Absent - Michelle Bellinger,

Freeholder Representative – Alex Marino - Present

County Staff – Greg Brookins – D.H.P.W. - Present

Secretary - Eric Husta – C.P.S. - Present

Members of the Public - Fred Akers- GEHWA Administrator

Discussion topics:

Motion to approve the minutes from our May meeting was made by Dick Colby and 2nd was provided by Elmer Ripley.

Mike Hogan recapped the field trip taken in June and what was observed at the various locations in Wharton Forest. He also updated the group on the illegal dumping of N.P.F. office renovation debris by a private contractor in Monroe Township. The debris has since been cleaned up with the exception of one smaller debris pile.

Round table discussion was had on possible speakers for the coming year. Some possible speakers include George Zimmerman from Stockton University, Stu Farrell, Catherine Treddick, a DEP speaker on linking WMAs and Estell Manor Park via pedestrian bridges, Atlantic County's master plan consultant, the current manager of the Forsythe Refuge, and possibly a representative of the Pinelands Byway project.

Steve Fiedler discussed a small lull in the Galloway Green Team activities as well as having a new director. There is some work being done on the community gardens and rain gardens.

Dick Colby mentioned Egg Harbor City recently received a \$30,000 grant to replace trees lost in the derecho. There is some resistance from municipal officials on allowing trees to be planted along the city's streets. Dick also mentioned needing to have the tree selections reviewed or recommended by a landscape architect.

Elmer Ripley discussed the drastic increase in tube and kayak use along the river along with the increased use of Weymouth Furnace as a launching site. Considerable discussion was had regarding the liveries using these areas and the homeowner complaints they are generating. Elmer was also approached about the federally funded byway signs going up in the area. This in turn led to discussion on the 7 byways in New Jersey.

Fred Akers spoke at length on the liveries using the Egg Harbor River. He summarized a meeting in Hamilton Township which took place approximately 3 weeks ago where residents voiced their concerns with the current conditions along the river. The town's solicitor is looking into the issue and will be possibly looking into the parking lots that have been expanded to accommodate the increase in this business. Fred also detailed a

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meeting with township officials which occurred 13 years ago where an effort was made to permit liveries with conditions of use. There were to be approved launch sites and limits set on the numbers of individuals introduced onto the river system. He mentioned the rate of 50 tubes per hour as the permitted rate. Fred also mentioned a desire to get the Pinelands Commission involved as a potential way to somehow regulate the use of the river by liveries with the ultimate goal of having the township work directly with the Pinelands Commission to reach a resolution.

Bill Reinert discussed his recent work with the Littoral Society doing horseshoe crab surveys. He mentioned the horseshoe crabs seem to be doing very well and discussed how the differences in water temperature seemed to influence their arrival and departure from their preferred mating and egg laying sites.

Freeholder Marino briefly discussed the county flow of communication and the evolution of media through applications such as Facebook and Twitter. He also mentioned two clean ups scheduled this fall, one being the Absecon Island Back Bay Cleanup set for 9/17 and the other being in Corbin City set for 10/29.

Ken Sooy said things have been fairly quiet but did inquire about the County's development plans for the end of Motts Creek Road. Eric Husta said the funding has been procured and permits obtained. He will check in with the planning department for a status update.

Jill Miles noted the number of applications being filed for restaurants in Atlantic County is robust. The health department has been tracking numerous special event throughout the county as well. There still haven't been any positive Zika virus tests but there have been three positive tests for West Nile virus in the vicinity of Birch Grove Park, Zion Road, and near the EHT Home Depot. Discussion was had regarding foreclosures and their pools becoming mosquitos breeding sites.

Eric Husta mentioned the Veterans Museum is coming along and a certificate of Occupancy has been obtained. Materials are being moved in and displays will be developed shortly. The parks are also extremely busy right now and the numbers of visitors are trending up.

General points of discussion included finding out when the first county park was developed. Eric Husta will be researching this topic and report back. The idea of placing the minutes on the county's website was also discussed.

Fred Akers also added that he is promoting the parks and is corresponding with county administration on the idea of a press event or possibly assembling a video.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ken Sooy at approximately 8:45 PM with Dick Colby providing the second.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, October 5th at the Canale Training Center in Egg Harbor Township

Cc. Dennis Levinson, County Executive
Jerry DelRosso, County Administrator
Diana Rutala, Dep. County Administrator
Frank D. Formica, Chairman - Board of Freeholders
Alex Marino, Board of Freeholders – PEAB Representative
Will Pauls – Board of Freeholders
Greg Brookins, Dept. Head Public Works
All Advisory Board Members