

Mountain Lakes Environmental Commission

February 24, 2015
Minutes

Commissioners present: Khizar Sheikh (Chair); John Horan; Mimi Kaplan; Allison Rankin; Marnie Vyff

Commissioners Absent: Gretchen Fry

Borough Council

Liaison: Bill Albergo

Public Guests: Sandy Batty
Ellen Emr

Call to Open: Chair Sheikh called the meeting open at 7:40.

Meeting Dates. Right now, Chair Sheikh stated that has the Environmental Commission (“EC”) scheduled to meet on the second Tuesday of every month. After discussion, it was decided that the schedule would be changed to meet the third Tuesday of every month, and the EC would meet again on March 17.

Meeting Minutes. Commissioners reviewed the December meeting minutes and had several changes for clarity. A revised draft of December’s meeting minutes will be circulated for approval at the March 17 meeting.

ANJEC. The ANJEC dues application. Chair Sheikh indicated that he will fill it out and send it to the Clerk’s office. Mountain Lakes has indicated that the borough will pay dues for Commissioners. There was no objection by any Commissioner.

Membership List. The current listing of EC Commissioner information was circulated. No Commissioner had changes. It was noted that the EC needs one member and two alternates. All commissioners voted in favor of Commissioner Vyff serving as Vice-Chair.

Freshwater Application Checklist. Commissioner Sheikh circulated a freshwater application checklist that was received for the King of Kings property. Commissioner Sheikh stated that he will contact the Clerk’s office to understand what is needed.

Council Committee Orientation. The Council has scheduled a Commission/Committee orientation on March 8, 2015. All volunteer boards/committees/commissions chairs are asked to attend this function or send a representative to attend and to make a short, 5 minute, presentation. Commissioner Sheikh will attend this event on behalf of the EC.

Mountain Lakes Clean-Up Day. The Council would like the EC to spearhead ML clean-up day. All commissioners agreed to do so. It will occur in April. There needs to be a marketing component and a management component on the day of the event. Councilperson Peter Holmberg managed the event in 2014, and Councilperson Albergo indicated that he would reach out to Councilperson Holmberg for a recap of what was done. Commissioner Vyff reported that the Green Team intends to apply for the Sustainable New Jersey grant for rain barrel availability.

PSE&G Rights of Way. The EC received a lengthy (2 in thick) document from PSE&G relating to rights of way of overhead power lines. Commissioner Rankin will review the document and provide a recommendation to the EC.

King of Kings Proposed Development. At the last Borough Council meeting, a developer proposed an ordinance for rezoning of the King of Kings property. It was mentioned at the meeting that the Economic Development Committee has been working with the developer on the zoning ordinance recommendation, without Planning Board and our planner's input. Under the proposed zone change, the zoning standards that apply in the rest of the town would be altered - restrictions for building height, impervious coverage, floor area ratio and setbacks are all looser than any other residential zone. The result will be a townhouse development that is more dense and taller than the one being built on Fanny and Morris. The property at issue has severe environmental constraints that won't be protected if the zone change is allowed to happen. The property has a steep ravine, a stream, wetlands associated with a stream, abuts parkland, and is in Mountain Lakes' aquifer recharge zone. It is also in wellhead protection tier 2 for a Parsippany well. It was raised that this borough-owned parkland may need a buffer or conservation setback. It is unclear at this point how large a buffer may be needed. Ms. Batty and Ms. Emr recommended that the EC review the current NRI and geologic maps for an understanding of the environmental make-up of the zone at issue. Ms. Batty also recommended that the EC speak with Brian Marshall, who is the Mountain Lakes' designee to the Tribrook watershed, which may be impacted. Ms. Emr suggested that the EC contact the Passaic River Coalition for additional expertise. The EC does not have the development application from developer Hornrock. Commissioner Sheikh stated that the Council has indicated that it would like to put together a committee comprising of the Chairs of the EC, Planning Board, and Zoning Board to discuss the best use of this property. Commissioner Sheikh stated that he had yet been contacted about this committee.

Respectfully submitted by Chair Khizar Sheikh.