**MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**MINUTES – JULY 14, 2022**

The July 14, 2022 meeting of the Mansfield Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:38 p.m. via Zoom. Participating in a group at the Municipal Building were Robert Jewell, Kathleen Todd, Glen Todd and Township Committeeman Glenn McGuinness who collectively joined the Zoom meeting using Mr. Jewell’s phone; Jim McMekin joined the group at 7:50 p.m.; Amanda Kilyk was excused. Gathering electronically were Chair Paul Tarlowe, Ruth Panté, Ann Bemis and a member of the public, Grace Kocher. Mr. Tarlowe apologized for any confusion due to his change of plans and not informing everyone in a timely manner. He reminded all that his e-mail in June explained a possible conflict for him for the July meeting and had asked for a volunteer to conduct the meeting; no one responded. Ms. Todd had circulated an Agenda and discussed with some commissioners meeting in person. Mr. Tarlowe discussed the planning required for meetings and will consider conducting future meetings in person as some have requested; the status of Covid transmission will be a factor in his decision making.

MINUTES

it was MOVED by Mr. Jewell to accept and approve the minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting, seconded by Mr. Tarlowe. All in favor with no corrections or amendments; the motion carried. No meeting was held in June.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

Bluebird Trail Update

Ms. Kocher expressed appreciation for the bluebird trail. Mr. Tarlowe shared the nestbox log documenting nesting activity at the eight boxes in place along the path. It has been a very good year, and some boxes are in a second clutch. Ms. Todd wants to join the next outing of checking the boxes.

Salem Oak Tree

Something, perhaps insects, ate some of the early leaves but a second set of leaves has now opened. The sign saying simply “Salem Oak” had been placed on the enclosure but does not explain the history or significance of the tree. A Certificate of Authenticity presented by NJDEP was shared. Mr. Tarlowe’s proposed wording for a sign was shared; a more permanent sign should be erected next year. For now he will work with the Clerk’s Office to mount temporary signs on the oak’s enclosure.

Port Murray Preserve / Morris Canal Greenway / Warren County Parks Foundation

A photo of the Morris Canal Inclined Plane SW turbine chamber was shared on screen; this is on Warren County property In Port Murray. Mr. Tarlowe noted the craftsmanship that went into the construction of the chamber and the engineering of the canal in general. The blocks of one chamber wall were removed years ago, possibly to allow salvage of the turbine for scrap during WWII. The chamber turbine can be seen from the path. It is 100 years old but appears stable. Once the Warren County Parks Foundation completes the clearing of the area and erects a fence for safe viewing, the Commission can consider leading interpretive walks to the site. Mr. Tarlowe believes it is a mission of the Commission to promote the town’s open space. He also encouraged everyone to visit Bread Lock Park to see the museum there; he demonstrates the model lock on the second Sunday of each month when the museum is open. He would like to see this Commission be more involved with the Morris Canal Greenway effort.

Proposed Blau Road Recycling Facility

Mr. Tarlowe reported a conversation with Mr. DeFeo regarding the status; he learned the proposal is to be reviewed by the Warren County Solid Waste Advisory Council, permits will be requested from Warren County and the NJDEP. A change of assessment from farmland to industrial would be required. A $0.50 per ton surcharge could generate money for Mansfield Township. Town permits would be required for two small buildings. Mr. Jewell reported nothing has been heard at the Land Use Board from the owners. Mansfield Township has sent a letter to the Warren County Commissioners stating objections.

Meadows at Mansfield Waste Water Treatment

Mr. Jewell has been following this and has kept this Commission informed. Waste from the site has been removed by going into a holding tank and then removed by a commercial company. As Land Use Board Chair, he recently signed documents for the next phase, which is for treatment on site as allowed by NJDEP.

Ms. Bemis, a resident at Meadows, said the Town Clerk has been informed of the holding tank issue. The developer had never gotten permits to operate this holding tank. No further COs will be issued until the permits are received. Ms. Bemis asked Mr. Jewell how to keep informed of the status, and he said Mr. Hotz has been telling the Land Use Board that the flows are not as were expected, so it is feasible to keep the current operation running. Mr. Jewell explained that nothing is wrong environmentally, that waste is being removed, but installation is late. Ms. Bemis was invited to Monday’s Land Use Board meeting. Mr. Tarlowe questioned whether a treatment plant on site requires Land Use Board approval, to which Mr. Jewell explained it is a DEP permit. Ms. Kocher questioned the size of the temporary holding tank; it was explained the total is 20,000 gallons, which should be explained in the Land Use Board Resolution. Ms. Bemis said there are probably 100 homes currently occupied and possibly 10 more waiting for COs. When Ms. Bemis questioned the source of water to the Meadows, she learned it is “city water”. Mr. Jewell explained the water initially fed from the Anderson Community well by two 8-inch water lines. Mr. Hotz was forced to put in 12-inch water lines under Route 57, transporting water now from NJ American Water.

Land Use Board

Mr. Jewell said nothing new is forthcoming. He said the Rt. 57 site (formerly Tony’s luncheonette) seems to be approved: work at the site has begun.

Green Team

Ms. Fascenelli reported the flea market held in June was a huge success.

Environmental Comments

Ms. Panté reported attending an online ANJEC seminar and reminded members these seminars are available on line and suggested members tune in to any topic at no charge to members.

Ms. Bemis questioned the township budget, in particular which department covers maintenance at town properties. Mr. Jewell reminded that he and other township residents volunteer considerable time and cover some expenses for projects.

NEW BUSINESS

Recycling and Environmental Program at Mansfield School

Ms. Todd recalled a “Treasures from Trash” program at the school some years ago; it focused on getting environmental thoughts to the students. Mr. Tarlowe not too long ago asked the school to circulate a flyer relating to the park and to the bluebird trail; the principal refused, saying “nothing new”. Mr. Tarlowe asked Ms. Todd to draft a plan and approach the school with it; we can then discuss it further.

Mr. McMekin MOVED to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Panté

**Next meeting date:**

**August 11, 2022**