

Highland Park Shade Tree Advisory Committee
Borough Hall, 221 S Fifth, Highland Park, NJ 08904



Minutes of STAC Meeting, January 10, 2007

Call to order 8:10 p.m.

Present: Carol Avelsgaard, Ruth Bowers, Arnold Henderson, Karen Swaine; proposed new members Belinda Beetham and Barbara Lewis; new council liaison Fern Walter Goodhart.

Special Premeeting Discussion with Council Liaison Fern Walter Goodhart. Our new liaison informed us of new personnel: administrator Karen Waldron and CFO Kathleen Kovac. Fern requested STAC guidance in pursuing:

- Consider the process for becoming a Community Wildlife Habitat City. For a whole town, requirements are high, and for us might require certifying the Native Plant Reserve, school yards, and a substantial number of private homes.
- Strengthen the tree ordinance.
- Update Community Forestry Management Plan (Green Communities Challenge Grant of DEP Community Forestry?)
- Other Grants sought. CME, the Borough engineers, submitted an application for a CSIP tree-pruning grant of a bit over \$50,000. January should decide this. Further funds are needed for the Environmental Center. Borough budget has \$25,000 contingency for matches.
- Articles for the Highland Park Quarterly. Submit to hpquarterly@hpboro.com.

REGULAR MEETING

Minutes from December were accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

- Inkberries were planted at the Native Plant Reserve, were watered, and are doing OK.
- Challenge Grant (lottery grant) to update our Community Forestry Management Plan is to be decided this month. STAC must update the plan even if we don't get the grant, as certification expired at the end of 2006 unless updated.
- Pump House Repairs. Carol will contact Frank Troy at DPW. Topics: Floor repair? What further repair? Fascia boards? Roof leak? Reconnect electricity and update wiring? Arnold will seek advice from a restoration carpenter
- CDBG Street Trees. Ruth will talk to Frank to see if it is going forward; need three estimates.

Environmental Center and NPR.

- Little work remains, according to Tomco's site supervisor. Scott Luthman provided a list of items dropped from the contract for lack of funds. These include solar panels, plantings (beyond a simple "no-mow mix" of grasses from Ernst Seed), and a topsoil covering outside the center's immediate surroundings. No geotextile was needed after all between the existing soils and the topsoil cap. Watering will be from a single hose connection placed in the ground under a metal lid; hoses must stretch across walks. PVC pipe under these walks could allow threading hoses through without obstructing the walk; these are not in the Tomco contract but could be installed by DPW later.
- Volunteers/interns will be needed for the center and reserve. Our current listing with Volunteer Management Centers on the web has brought several groups. The next is expected to be Rutgers pharmacy post-doctoral fellows on April 21. Fern said NJ Serves is a good source for workers; Arnold will investigate. Carol mentioned a neighborhood in Minneapolis where students came up with landscape solutions; we might ask Rutgers students to design a watering system. This might be part of the design study being planned for Prof. Seiko Goto's landscape architecture class.

Barwood Marsh. A path from Valley Place Ravine and the new county land at former Red's Marina to Donaldson Park would have to cross or skirt the freshwater marsh still in private hands (Barwood Corporation). A Planning Board agreement at the time of house construction uphill required a conservation/public use easement below the property lines of the houses, but no easement has been legally drawn up, and no stakes placed. Fern hopes to have the easement properly memorialized this year.

Meadows Trail. The opening ceremony took place October 27, 2006. Edison Wetlands Association is studying possible trail options. David Wheeler of EWA spoke informally with federal Fish and Wildlife about possible restoration funds beyond our Recreational Trails grant. For anyone walking, blue ribbons mark possible trail, yellow obstacles, and white tires to recycle.

NEW BUSINESS

Members. Belinda Beetham and Barbara Lewis agreed to become our newest members, and will be suggested to Mayor Frank. Street Fair. May 20, open 11-5, with preparation earlier.

Garden Club. Fern said there are folks interested in the possibility of a HP Garden Club. She will do an invitation.

Volunteer Contribution day will be April 3rd, a Wednesday. Gifts might be a small bag of native-plant seeds (perhaps different selections, one for potted plants, one for outdoors sun, one for outdoors shade).

Environmental Center Opening. April 22nd is Earth day, and both the center and Centennial Park will have "ribbon-cutting."

DPW. Carol and Fern will arrange regular meetings with DPW, as so many projects require communication.

Next Meeting: February 14, 8 p.m., Borough Hall.