

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2013

MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION FEBRUARY 28, 2013

Chairman James Ruff called the meeting to order at 8:08 p.m., it having been duly noted that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of which was sent to The Record and the Newark Star Ledger on the 28th day of December, 2012. Members present were: James Ruff, Kevin Avery, Peter Garvey, Harry Menta and Gene Hammond. Also present were: Cynde Hammond, Karen Riede, Don Torino as well as Denise and Edith from the Bergen County Audubon Society, and two girl scouts working on their Gold Badge, Erin Conversano and Ariana.

The minutes of the January 24, 2013, meeting was approved.

Old Business: Steve Quinn is working on illustrations for the signs. Kevin Avery will work on text for the sign. Steve will be able to devote more time to the illustrations once he retires in March.

NYRA – Karen Riede said the land is for sale and Tom Curry appears to be out of the picture for now and only the attorney is involved.

Deck – Peter Garvey gave an update on the dock. It looks like the new dock will be managed by the Riverkeeper. Commissioner MacNeill was at the meeting regarding the dock that Peter attended. It looks like they will try to rebuild the dock where it was including maybe a concrete pad. They will use the existing gangplank that was saved. The dock company would put in support pipes or poles and a tee off of it.

Commissioner MacNeill questioned what funds were available from the EC budget for the dock. Commissioner Anlian will need to answer this question. They want to go back and look at the dock at low tide. The DPW will do a large part of this work. Using the existing site is easier permit wise as well as cost wise. Apparently another dock will be put somewhere in Teaneck.

Kevin Avery invited other interested parties to come to discuss the eagle nest in Ridgefield Park. Steve Quinn is very concerned about the well-being of the eagle nest and wants to make sure that Ridgefield Park is very visible as a spokesperson for the eagles. Kevin provided the booklet by the DEP – Energy Lines – The Eagle Has Landed – that contains information as to the lack of successful moving of an eagle nest as well as platform nests. The last successful move was probably in 1979. Skymark has indicated that they are applying for a take permit. Whatever followed in the meeting with Skymark was the Environmental Commission's alternatives to it. Skymark apparently would be open to taking the tree down. One proposal was to rezone so that the take permit was going to be a disturb permit instead. They wanted to go in closer to the nest because it is believed the eagles would tolerate that. They also want to put up poles. They do appear open to the idea to bring that alternative back to the DEP.

They seem to be resistant to these ideas. Skymark was asked to keep in touch with their discussions with the DEP. Kevin Avery has not heard anything back yet. There was an informal meeting to discuss this. The EC is opposed to putting up these poles. There is no assurance the eagles will use them. The EC needs to make a statement to the DEP to seriously consider a no disturb type of thing. They would rather not have the poles. They would prefer to have the southern parcel for a remediation plan. There is concern as to how close they should be allowed to come to the nest. It must be a reasonable compromise otherwise it will not work.

The Bergen Audubon Society is personally hesitant about giving the DEP too good an alternative. Don Torino said he is not sure what is too good an alternative. Skymark will be responsible for a remediation plan because they will take down the nest. Another alternative is to get a take permit but not using it. RP needs to make a statement to the DEP and should be on the same page as the Bergen County Audubon

Society. The EC needs to make a statement to the Planning Board and the DEP. The Bergen County Audubon has been organizing a letter writing campaign that they want the nest protected.

Kathy Clark of the DEP wrote back and asked that people should not be asked to write her as she is not a decision maker. There has been no action other than some tree clearing. The goal is to keep the eagles nesting at the Overpeck Creek. Members should write to Bob Martin of the DEP.

This is not a super fund site. Problem is now cleaning up the site. Karen Riede thought it would be a good idea for the EC to adopt a resolution that it would be in the best interest of the eagles to leave the land and tree as is. It would be a strong statement from the EC. The resolution should be sent to other environmental commissions and ask them to adopt the same resolution.

Jim Ruff will draft a letter to Langan to find out if there is a remedial action plan for this property yet. Karen Riede wondered when this plan is coming before the Planning Board. The EC had no date. They have been before the Planning Board before but there is no final date yet.

Steve Quinn would like something from the EC for the next Planning Board meeting. Skymark is paying for the remediation. DEP is supposed to be working for the public. They should put all their heads together and protect the eagles. The pressure should be on the DEP to protect the eagles. The EC needs to make sure it is visible on this issue.

Steve Quinn and Kevin Avery will draft a letter to the DEP. Jim Ruff will work on the letter to Langan and see where that goes.

Don Torino asked, as the devil's advocate, if this is going to go the way it may go, is there any other alternative that the town should be requesting. If the DEP says that everything must come down, RP should be ready with a remediation plan. The EC should be ready with what it wants for remediation. Skymark is not looking to be a bad guy. The eagles are the main concern of the Audubon Society but other issues may override the eagles. There are a lot of other issues involved in this decision.

The court of public opinion may be the best ally of the eagles. There has been activity at the nest. The eagles are working on the nest. There is a good chance that they are already in the nest.

Harry Menta suggested that maybe the EC should get local politicians and assemblymen involved. If the EC could find a champion, it would be a good thing. Karen Riede said she was willing to take a member of the EC with her to visit a local assemblywoman, Marlene Caridi, who is located in Ridgefield. She had served on the Ridgefield EC in the past. Kevin Avery said he was willing to go with Karen Riede.

This particular nesting pair has value because they are so resilient. The female has a tracker on. The value to children as well as adults coming out to see these eagles is immeasurable. This work began 40 years ago and this nest is a direct result of all the past work.

Jim Ruff said he will work on a resolution for the eagles.

New Business: The EC should talk about going down and working on standing the trees up at the nature preserve that are now down.

Future Activities: Earth Day 2013 will be scheduled for April 13, 2013. High tide is 11:48 a.m. that day. The following were contacted about participating in Earth Day:

NJ Batman	Teaneck Creek Conservancy
Frank Vincenti of Wild Dog Foundation	Overpeck Preserve
Tenaflly Nature Center	Flat Rock Brook Nature Preserve
Snakes n Scales	Puffin Group
Wallaby Tales (Eyes Wild)	Risky Business Band
Lenape Indians	Hudson River Fisherman
Facepainter	Wanda Canoe Club
Boy Scout Troop 3	Library
Supt. Christopher Onorato	DPW

Police Dept.
 Rescue Squad
 Bergen County Audubon Society
 Cub Scouts
 Cosmic Wheel
 Gil Hawkins
 NJ Meadowlands
 Pete Plucino, Mosquito Control
 Bill Sheehan

Ambulance Corp.
 BCUA
 Board of Health
 Bruce Herrick
 Fire Dept.
 Girl Scouts
 OEM
 Shade Tree Commission
 Environmental Club

The following have accepted the invitation to date:

NJ Batman
 Tenaflly Nature Center
 Snakes –n Scales
 Wallaby Tales (Eyes Wild) (contract received)
 Angel – Facepainter
 Risky Business Band (contract received)
 Shade Tree Commission
 Girls Scouts – Janine LaValle and Peggy Conversano are the reps.

Shows will be scheduled as follows:

11:30 a.m. Wallaby Tales - Eyes Wild
 12:30 p.m. Tenaflly Nature Center
 1:30 p.m. NJ Batman
 2:30 p.m. Snakes –n Scales

The DPW will be contacted about updating the banner. The schools will be advised that posters are not necessary this year. There is no place to display the posters.

The two girl scouts attending the meeting, Erin and Arianna, are being mentored by Harry Menta. Ariana has a project in mind by the Lincoln Avenue park. Erin is interested in doing the sign and some planting for the nature preserve. Harry Menta will contact Commissioner Anlian to make sure things are done properly.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 28, 2013.

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca