

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015 AT 7:30 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 26, 2015**

Chairman James Ruff called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 31st day of December, 2014. Members present were: James Ruff, Kevin Avery, Peter Garvey and Harry Menta. Commissioner Anlian was also present at the meeting.

The minutes of the January 22, 2015, meeting were approved.

Correspondence received: None at this time.

Old Business:

Eagles – Kevin Avery said that Skymark appeared before the Planning Board again. USF&W and the DEP have been talking with Skymark sometime in late January. Skymark advised they are trying to work on a compromise with them. USF&W said the road must have a buffer – the trees so the eagles can't see the road and the road can't see up to the eagles. After the buffers are up, they should be able to proceed in any season but the EC is not sure of that.

Both agencies are still insisting on an alternate site for a nest on a tower. Skymark could apply to take over that property to develop it if the eagles don't use it or there is a tower. The area would be mitigated. DEP is still concerned about contamination. DEP would like the area to be cleaned up. Skymark advised the Planning Board that both agencies seem willing to compromise. The Planning Board does not know of any approval but this is what they want to do.

Skymark will not get any kind of approval before the Planning Board until May or June. They are trying to deal with other issues before the Planning Board. It will probably be at least two more meetings before they will get any type of approval.

John Anlian thinks the EC should send out a letter acknowledging the USF&W letter, thanking them for taking the position they did, and that the EC would appreciate if it were allowed to be part of the discussion. There needs to be some type of communication line open with the DEP and the USF&W. The EC does not see the need for the tower and questions if it is really necessary. Jim Ruff will draft a letter asking that the EC be included in future conversations.

Interpretive Signs – Commissioner Anlian advised that if the interpretive signs are not installed this year, it will be the last year that funds are available for signs. Kevin Avery will speak to Steve Quinn about the drawings. This year it is imperative that three signs be installed in McGowan Park. Kevin Avery has given the text to Steve Quinn.

Riverside Park – The EC needs to source and order the plants for this. Jim Ruff has a list of plants that Don Smith recommended such as switch grass, willow tree, rosa rugosa and red cedar as well as sources for those. Jim will check with Musser on the prices of plants and see what he can order. Commissioner Anlian said he would speak to the DPW about having summer help water the plants throughout the summer. This project is small enough that the members of the EC as well as some volunteers can handle it. Scouts should also be asked to provide some assistance with this project. A lot of the knotweed has been knocked back after the EC worked on this area last year.

Nature Preserve – Kevin Avery and Peter Garvey will check out this area in March to evaluate it. It is too large an undertaking for the EC to manage on its own. Commissioner Anlian thinks the area needs to be cleaned up and then immediately seed it with plants to compete with the poison ivy. Another town faced

with the problem of poison ivy, used goats to clean out the area. Since this area is not too large, it might be an affordable option to handle the problem. Commissioner Anlian said that possibly hiring day workers might solve this situation. After EC members check out this area, decisions will be made on how to proceed. The scouts should also provide some members to help with this area, which was an Eagle Scout project.

Spring Bird Count - The spring bird count will be held on May 9 before the Earth Day Celebration. It will begin at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and last until 10:00 a.m. Those interested can also meet at 8:30 a.m. at the amphitheater in Overpeck County Park.

Earth Day 2015 – Jim Ruff checked the tides schedule and it looks like May 9 (11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) would be the best day for the boat. High tide is 2:37 p.m. that day. The show schedule is as follows:

11:30 a.m. Eyes of the Wild/Wallaby Tales
12:30 p.m. Tenaflly Nature Center
2:30 p.m. Snakes-N-Scales

The Wildlife will host an all-day educational wildlife program with live bats and educational wildlife exhibit stand. The face painter will be available throughout the day. Risky Business Bluegrass Band will provide the music. The scouts will handle the food. Boat rides will also be available. Vouchers have been sent out to everyone for signature and return to the Clerk's Office so that payment can be made before Earth Day. There will be a spring bird count beginning at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and lasting until 10:00 a.m. Interested parties can also meet up with the EC at 8:30 a.m. at the amphitheater in Overpeck County Park.

New Business: Commissioner Anlian advised that for years RP has been dealing with the issue of CSOs. The State is on a crusade to eliminate and/or eliminate the impact of outflows to allow raw sewage into the water. The EPA has now issued an edict that all towns that have CSOs must either treat all the waste water or build holding tanks. This will cost multi-millions of dollars, about \$100 million, for RP to accomplish. The DEP has acknowledged that the Hackensack River and Overpeck Creek is tidal flow, which involves thousands of NY CSOs. If RP did everything they wanted them to do, it would have no appreciable effect on the quality of the water anyway.

RP must come up with a response. If they are able to come up with something with Fort Lee and Hackensack, they will have five years to do the work. If they don't work together, they will only have three years. RP sent a letter to the other towns to see if they are interested in working together with RP. This could have a great impact on RP.

The second topic Commissioner Anlian wanted to bring up was the Sustainable Jersey program that he would like to see the EC get involved with. The Mayor would like to see RP officially participating in this program. Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities in New Jersey that want to go green, save money and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term. Although RP does many of the things they suggest, it is not officially registered as a participant in the program. Harry Menta said he would look into the program. Peter Garvey said he would work with Harry on the program.

There are some small grants available through the program that maybe the EC could get involved with. Harry will report next month on the program. The link for the program is www.sustainablejersey.com.

Kevin Avery advised he will be away for the March meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015, at **7:30 p.m.**

The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca