

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.

**MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
DECEMBER 19, 2013**

Chairman James Ruff called the meeting to order at 8:05 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 and Steve Quinn. Also present was Marco Salazar and Lisa Infantino from the scouts.

The minutes of the November 21, 2013, meeting were approved.

Correspondence received: None

Old Business:

Eagles – Jim Ruff has the report from Skymark on the soil results. It is the same report received as last year. Steve Quinn received a letter that was addressed to him on the envelope but on the inside said Dear Mr. Tarino. He thinks multiple letters were probably sent and someone forgot to change the inside of the letter. It is from the US Dept. of the Interior, Fish & Wild Life, NJ Field Office from Eric Shrading. It is basically a thank you for the letter and concern for the eagles and helping Skymark. "We will do our utmost to insure that the impacts to resident bald eagles are minimized and to increase the likelihood that the nesting pair will continue to nest successfully at this in the future; however, potential impacts to eagles will need to be balanced with the appropriate remediation of the site."

After the meetings with Skymark regarding the EC's proposal, a plan for a nesting tower was received by the Village. These existed at the time of the meeting with Skymark. The drawing shows the site and the location of the proposed tower. It also shows the location of two new silver maples, which are 10-15 feet at best. They are supposed to be protection for the nesting. John Cote and Mike Nevins were present at this meeting as well.

This is a drawing from Langan Engineering, which is also clearly stamped with the stamp of Gil Hawkins' studio. It is a drawing of the proposed tower. It is stamped by Langan and approved with a permit on October 4 (EC met with Skymark and Langan on October 13). It is the State's Dredging and Sediment Technology. This permit is only for the footing, which would be 18 ft. x 18 ft. (cement) in the wetlands. If you read this, you can see there is a 30-day limitation on the opportunity for any concerns to request a hearing. It is 30 days notice of the decision being published by DEP. Steve tried to call John Anlian but was unsuccessful. He then called David Jenkins, who is head of the Endangered Species, and also called Kathy Clark. Kathy Clark has never responded to any call or email from Steve Quinn even though she responds to Don Tarino and Gil Hawkins.

Dave Jenkins did call Steve back. All of the parties have been copied on any correspondence from the EC. What he suspected was that the state plodded along and responded to an earlier application and although Skymark is saying they are not going to act on this, they just went ahead not knowing that the EC was in negotiations with Skymark and the State approved the wetlands permit to invade the wetlands. He said it would be a good procedure to have both the EC and Skymark write a letter to Susan Dietrich and let her know that there is an alternative and that Skymark does not intend to utilize this permit.

Steve then called Tony Noce to see the status of the revised drawings and see if they were going to have the EC come over again to discuss the matter. He responded saying they are working on the drawings and it is taking a little longer than they hoped and said they really just want to talk privately and don't want this getting out to the media or public until he first speaks with Mr. Ruff and Steve and then they will go public with their plans. The Building Dept. received the drawings for a tower and the EC was surprised since it was negotiating for a different plan when the plans for a tower were received and now the State

has given a permit for building a reinforced concrete foundation in the wetlands. The EC would like a voice in this. Tony Noce said this was part of the past and they were no longer going to proceed with this. Since these are options open to Skymark, the EC should send a letter advising that it is in negotiations for a different plan. Steve then called Suzanne Dietrich to ask what the time limit was for input on the proposed tower. She said that everyone had input on this tower concept, including Ridgefield (probably meaning Ridgefield Park). That 30 day limit is only if you were intending to file a legal suit to stop the work according to Ms. Dietrich. Steve doesn't think the EC would do that since it is working with the developer, Skymark, to do a different proposal. She said there is nothing preventing Skymark from using the proposal but she also said if that were the case, it would behoove the EC to have Skymark and the Village of Ridgefield Park advise the State they are in negotiations for a different plan.

The Building Dept. and Planning Dept. both have to first approve these plans. The EC members have their take on these plans. Jim Ruff still thinks the push behind the tower is a direct way to take the tree out. Skymark does not want to take the tree down. The only way this tower will go up is if the tree is out. The EC does not think that Skymark would have bothered to meet with the EC if their intention were to remove the tree. The EC thinks the plan was put into motion months ago and it just finally came marching along and was approved. However, now that there is a permit, it is a cause for concern. This will just make it easier for Skymark to remove the tree if necessary. Steve will respond to Suzanne Dietrich and also to Tim Bartle, who is the remediation contact.

Although the LSRP will make the final call, Steve thinks it important that the EC makes their concerns known. The EC feels that the more letters sent to different people will alert the State that the EC is serious about their concerns and not just trying to be a rebel rouser. The way the report is written it could sound bad. There really could be contaminants in just about anything and anywhere but he is encouraged after his conversation. Steve could write in response that the EC is very pleased to learn that the contaminants are not at a level that would require the cutting of the tree and that a more intense capping is sufficient and in reference to consolidating the creek bank, the EC is hoping it can be done in a manner that wouldn't destroy the tree but at the same time, the EC is aware that with all of the construction at the site, the birds may abandon the nest for one, even two years.

Steve thinks it would be great to keep the eagles on people's minds such as noting their sitings or getting a good photo in the paper.

Eagle Talk – The EC thinks it important to keep the residents advised of the status of the eagles nest. Steve Quinn and Kevin Avery will give a talk to residents. Steve will check with Cynde Hammond or DPW about when it could be held. It will probably be held in January.

Interpretive Signs – Steve Quinn is working on the drawings.

Bat Watch – Joe Angeli needs to be contacted to see when a date should be set.

Eagle Scout Project – Marco Salazar came to discuss his proposed Eagle Scout Project at the nature preserve. The EC was thinking about making an entrance. There is no entrance and the EC would like to see it be more inviting.

Marco said he came to formally propose an improvement to the path of the nature preserve. In its present state it is overgrown with vines. There is also other vegetation present on the pathway. There are a few fallen or half-fallen trees that have the potential to present danger to anyone walking in the area. Marco would like to clear all the vines and vegetation that has grown over the pathway. He would like to install either gravel or woodchips along the path to prevent further growth and to keep the gravel and woodchips from flowing into the marshland that is next to the nature propose. He is proposing the placement of railroad ties along the path and also to make sort of a formal order to where the path begins and ends. He also plans on removing the half-fallen trees in the vicinity of the pathway. He would like to put a bench or two in the overlook area to provide a sitting area that overlooks the marsh land.

Jim Ruff said that the EC talked possibly about a sign that could probably easily be installed. Marco said he thought it was possible to do this as long as it is not overly expensive to install. The EC thinks the benches are a good idea. Steve Quinn said an area to post some type of signage, such as a bulletin

board with some type of shed to prevent water damage, would be an improvement. Marco said he has already spoken to Alan O'Grady.

He spoke to Alan O'Grady along with Steve Quinn and Peter Garvey as well as Commissioner MacNeill. They discussed what he proposed tonight. They know the overgrowth of the vines is a big problem at the nature preserve. The main concern of Alan O'Grady is the accessibility of the DPW to get to the drains. Marco said he was last down there in October. Steve Quinn advised that the DPW has done some work since then based on this discussion. The mulch has been smoothed. The path is clear. The trees are out of the way and have been cleared. The area for the overlook is also cleared and has made a more accessible overlook. Alan O'Grady suggested to not use wood chips, to use gravel. Emergency vehicles have to be able to gain access if necessary. The difference is that now the gravel would be contained rather than when it was installed with no borders. Marco will need to speak to Alan O'Grady about what has been done, what he needs to do, and what he will need to raise money for. Marco said he will meet with Alan O'Grady again. If some of the work he intended to do is already done, he can focus on other parts of the project.

Steve Quinn said there are still a number of trees hanging over the path. He might need to contact Aspen. He might have to raise money for the gravel and perhaps fabric to put under the gravel. Alan O'Grady will be very important to maintain contact with throughout this project. He must make sure that everything done is environmentally safe. The final grading and contouring must not become a catch basin. He still needs to make his formal presentation to the scout troop. Steve Quinn suggested that he first meet with Alan O'Grady and then make his presentation to the troop. He needs to make sure the type of gravel installed does not run down the path and is contained. He will also work on the sign and benches. The benches needs to be sturdy and anchored tightly to the ground. Alan O'Grady would be helpful in discussing the proper benches. Steve Quinn told Marco that if he wanted anyone to join him at the meeting with Alan O'Grady, he would be happy to attend the meeting and he's sure Commissioner Anlian would also attend if asked.

The EC thinks it would be a good idea for Marco to come back before the EC to discuss his final plans before presenting them to the scouts. The next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. Steve Quinn told him to write up his notes from his discussions with the Commissioners and Alan O'Grady and make this part of his presentation. His meeting did get the project started. He will return in January with his final plans. Jim Ruff advised him that if he had any questions before the meeting to feel free to email the EC to keep the project moving.

Christmas Bird Count – December 7 was the Christmas Bird Count. The Patriot should be coming out with a post article covering the bird count.

Earth Day 2014 – Jim Ruff read that the Overpeck Park will be holding its first Earth Day on April 26 & 27.

May 17, 2014, was set as Earth Day 2014. High tide is 12:51 p.m. on that day. The EC will start with a bird watch from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Earth Day will run from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Invitations went out and responses have started to come in. Fran Orovitz responded that the scouts will participate. Peggy Conversano said the girls scouts would also participate and are hoping to have more tables this year. NJ Batman sent the invoice for the show. The shows will be kept on the same time schedule as last year. Angel the face painter, Tenafly Nature Center and Risky Business have all advised they will be participating.

Steve Quinn will be doing the bird watch prior to Earth Day from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. It will start at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and then meet at 8:30 a.m. at the amphitheater in the County Park. It will be advertised on the same flyer as Earth Day.

Meeting dates for 2014 were set for **7:30 p.m.** as follows:

JANUARY 23
FEBRUARY 27
MARCH 27

JULY – NO MEETING
AUGUST – NO MEETING
SEPTEMBER 25

APRIL 24
MAY 22
JUNE 26

OCTOBER 23
NOVEMBER 20 (THIRD THURSDAY)
DECEMBER 18 (THIRD THURSDAY, IF NECESSARY)

New Business:

Leaf Composting: Steve Quinn thinks it would be good to do composting within the Village. John Anlian will check with John Anlian to inquire about composting and start from there. The EC should look into this matter further. Jim will speak to John Anlian about this and take it from there.

Canada Goose: Steve is not against the Canada Goose returning to the parks. It is just illegal to broadcast loudspeaker sounds in public areas. That is what is so intrusive and offensive in a public park, whether it is music or a constant loud broadcasting of this sound, it is inappropriate as well as ineffective. The EC should visit the parks and note the time of the sounds and if there are birds present and report back at the next meeting. Recordings probably would be helpful. Noise pollution is also a serious issue. The Village Newsletter should address issues like this, including leaf blowers. The EC should advise people that a little leaf litter is good for the garden.

Kevin Avery signed his oath of office.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 23, 2014, at **7:30 p.m.**

The meeting ended at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca