

## **NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2013**

### **MINUTES OF THE RP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION SEPTEMBER 26, 2013**

Chairman James Ruff called the meeting to order at 8:10 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, Steve and Linda Quinn. Also present was Ariana Dindial.

The minutes of the June 27, 2013, meeting were approved.

#### **Correspondence received:**

- M&S, 7/30/13, Turnpike Salt Shed, NJDEP Wetlands Development Permit
- PSE&G 7/22/13, Application for Wetlands Permit for Geotechnical Investigation – Northeast Grid Reliability Project
- NJDEP 8/28/13 Eagle response Letter

#### **Old Business:**

Jim Ruff advised the members that they should feel free to add anything to the agenda that they would like discussed at the meeting. He sends it out so that everyone can be prepared for the meeting and if there is an additional matter a member would like brought up they should feel free to add it to the agenda.

A motion was made by Jim Ruff and seconded by Kevin Avery to change the 2014 meeting time to 7:30 p.m. All were in favor of this motion.

**Eagles** – Steve Quinn has been in discussion with the state about the eagle's nest. He was advised that the only offered solution offered by Skymark was the tower. They advised Steve that it was never done before in New Jersey and had never worked before in New Jersey (eagles voluntarily moving to a manmade structure after removing their nest). Steve was told that the state advised Skymark to build the tower even higher, 75-100 feet tall.

Steve advised them of the other proposal made by the Environmental Commission. The state was unaware of this until Steve Quinn informed them of the subdivision. The state advised Steve of a waiver available for the developer. Skymark may be able to use this waiver if we could convince them to file for it to seek relief from remediating that portion. We need to convince Skymark to apply for a waiver to leave the tree and sub-divide. They can't go in the wetlands to develop anyway.

Steve Quinn is waiting for Anthony Noce to get back to him with a time for a meeting or to send him the proposal. (An email was received shortly before the meeting but the EC has not yet received the letter he sent). Steve will mention the communication with the state for the appeal and why it is a good idea for them to do that. Steve will also call Dave Jenkins and Cathy Clarke to let them know the EC is doing this. The EC should consider what it would like to see if the eagle's nest is removed. The EC does not want to see the platform installed as any type of alternative. The EC wants the eagles to stay in Ridgefield Park even though that may not be the primary concern of all parties. Remediation of the site may result in the eagles abandoning the nest. Plan B is they cap everything.

What is the plan if they say this needs to be done? The EC wants to set the stage for the future. It would like to see real restoration effort that does not include a tower. The EC wants Skymark to plant real trees. The platform will be a permanent eyesore. It is the residents of Ridgefield Park that will lose out if the eagles leave and Ridgefield Park is left only with a tower as an eyesore that does not work. The EC needs to partner with Skymark and let them take the stand to apply for relief. The EC should propose a

sub-division regardless of whether or not the tree stays or comes down and all the land capped. Plan B would be the same footprint but the area where the nest was would be capped and then planted with cottonwoods with hopes for future eagle nesting. The property is gigantic and there is room for a lot of flexibility. Skymark does not want to be bad neighbors. They also want to come out looking good in this situation. The EC would like to see a preserve as an alternative for the benefit of Ridgefield Park, where the nest is. The wetlands cannot be touched anyway so the smaller area of trees that includes the nest is relatively small. Steve will do a site plan drawing to suggest to Skymark how to adjust their development to accommodate the nesting eagles and provide for an interpretive area around the wetland for RP residents.

The EC is waiting for the remedial report from Langan and should probably invite them to RP. The EC will try to get the meeting scheduled two weeks from tonight. Steve Quinn will also invite Don Torino to the meeting. The November 16, 2012, report says the next step is the Remedial Investigation Report (RIR). Steve Quinn will stress maintaining the nest. The EC needs to stop the tower as a Board looking out for the interests of RP. The EC needs to serve the residents of RP who are losing an amenity if the eagle's nest is removed. The Commission needs to convince Skymark that having nesting eagles is an amenity for their development. The EC must keep letter writing going that state their intentions and what the EC is proposing.

Jim Ruff will respond to the September 23 letter from Anthony Noce of Skymark. Steve Quinn will write the letter to Dave Jenkins and cc: Tim Kubiak. The Fish & Game, DEP should receive copy of all letters.

Steve Quinn would like to see two meetings per month to keep things on track. The EC will meet at 7:30 p.m. on October 8 and Steve will try to arrange a meeting with Skymark on October 10. Steve will call for status from Dave Jenkins and Cathy Clarke. Steve will draw up both case scenarios. RP should be compensated if we lose the eagles by being provided with a sanctuary that will provide RP residents with opportunities for environmental education and maximize the possibility of bald eagles nesting in this sanctuary in the future.

**RP Nature Preserve** – Maintenance is needed at Nick Gerken's project. It is very overgrown and about one-quarter of the trees looks non-viable.

**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.

**Girl Scout Project** – Ariani Dindial said that Erin Conversano added mulch and flowers to her project. Ariani's project on Lincoln Avenue is doing well.

Steve Quinn met with Marco Salazar, a member of Boy Scout Troop 3, and Alan O'Grady to discuss his Eagle Scout project. Steve has not heard anything further from Marco. Ariani said she would try to contact him.

#### **New Business:**

**Tree Walk** - October 12 at 2:00 p.m. was set as the next tree walk lead by John Anlian. Harry Menta will write up a press release and a flyer will be distributed in the schools.

**Christmas Bird Count** – December 7 was set as the next Christmas Bird Count. It will start at 7:00 a.m. at McGowan Park and also at 9:30 a.m. at the amphitheater in Overpeck County Park. Harry Menta will write up a press release and a flyer will be distributed in the schools.

**Earth Day 2014** – May 17, 2014, was set as Earth Day 2014. High tide is 12:51 p.m. on that day. Everyone should check their schedule and a final decision will be made at the next meeting.

Harry Menta is looking to get some information on non-toxic rat poisoning.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 24, 2013.

The meeting ended at 9:50p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca