

MINUTES FOR THE RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING OF

THE HIGHTSTOWN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Meeting Date and Time: July 25, 2023 at 7pm

Meeting Location: Held in person at the Hightstown Historical Society

Attendees: Todd Frantz (Council Liaison)
Tom Muza (Chair)
Gary Grubb
David Zaiser (Shade Tree Official)
Henry Wang (Secretary)
Joseph Studholme (Vice Chair)
Lucia Middleton (Watershed Institute)
Michael Bollentin

Absent: John Laudenberg (Planning Board Liaison)
Shani Peretz (Peddie School Liaison)

Open Public Meeting Act Statement: In Compliance with Chapter 213 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of the Annual Notice published in the Trenton Times and Princeton Packet by the Borough Clerk and posted on the Borough Website.

Approval of Agenda: Agenda was approved

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Regular meeting minutes from April 25, 2023 were approved.

Shade Tree Matters:

- David provided an update, which was distributed in the Shade Tree Official's report prior to the meeting.
- Draft tree ordinance was circulated. The template was provided by the state. Hightstown does have an ordinance but does not have a penalty for removing a street tree without authorization. There was discussion about the penalty, and it was suggested potentially adding language for a minimum penalty of \$1,000 plus the actual cost of replacing the tree. David will submit a memorandum with recommendations to Council.

New Business:

- Youth Leadership Internship Update: there was a discussion about the program now that it has concluded. There were 11 students from Hightstown High School and Peddie, all of whom completed the internship successfully. Planning ahead, some ideas for next year were (a) beginning earlier to avoid ending in May, when students have other competing obligations, (b) have the interns work on submissions to Sustainable Jersey, and (c) thinking about ways to improve turnout to the presentation.
- Hightstown Master Plan Overview by Matt Morgan (Planning Board): Matt was not present. Tom distributed the survey. Members of the EC can review the existing master plan and then fill out the questionnaire for the next meeting, where a more in depth discussion will take place.
- Cultural Arts Commission Project: the Commission has funds to commence a project with recycled materials, done by students. This is still in planning phase but they may get parks and recreation and the EC involved.

- **Complete Streets Committee – Mobility Plan Implementation** (recurring item on agenda). David provided an update, mainly that the Committee was also reviewing the Master Plan.
- **Sustainable Jersey** (recurring item on the agenda): Tom will work on distributing materials to all members via Dropbox or other cloud service.
- **Memo from NJ Dept of Agriculture**: states that you cannot restrict people from having bees. Hightstown does not have any ordinance, and state law pre-empts any local action with regard to restricting bee keeping and related activities.

Parks and Recreation: Rocky Brook Garden is full, and there is a beehive that is currently active there.

Planning Board Update: Planning board liaison not present

Grants and Funding Update: Per update from Todd, there is \$35,000 left over in the capital budget for the greenway. \$20,000 was put in the first budget. There will be a future meeting where it will be reviewed.

Plan Review: No reviews this month.

Liaison updates:

- The Watershed Institute – none
- Meadow Lakes – none
- Peddie School – none
- Hightstown High School – none

Correspondence: No Correspondence

Conferences and Workshops: no updates

Calendar: no updates

Update from Todd: see above under “Grants and Funding Update”.

Adjournment