

HOLMDEL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Wednesday, **April 19, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.**

Ralph Blumenthal, Vice Chairperson opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m., and Loretta Coscia read the following **OPENING STATEMENT:** “I hereby announce, pursuant to Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided on January 13, 2022, to the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times. Notice has also been posted in the entrance of Town Hall, filed in the Clerk’s Office, and posted on the Township’s website, www.holmdeltownship.com, all pursuant to Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act.”

Roll Call

Present: Ralph Blumenthal
Randy Rauscher
Chiung-Yin Cheng Liu
Jill Perez
Tony Salerno
Gary Vanderham
Janet Jackel, Alternate 1
John Galasso, Alternate 2
Loretta Coscia, Secretary

Absent: Karen Strickland, *Chairperson*

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence to Honor Military, Police and First Responders

Environmental Commission Business

- Draft Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2023, **Motion** by Janet seconded by Gary to approve the minutes. Motion carried on voice vote by eligible members.
- New Jersey American Water Annual Environmental Grant Program – Chiung-Yin said she contacted the Superintendent’s office, and the Supervisor of Science is on maternity leave so they will skip this year, as they do not have help.
- 2023 ANJEC Grants for Open Space Stewardship Projects – Janet stated that she submitted the grant application proposing enhancements to Neil Waackaack Park. Last week, she was joined by the boy scouts, and they see there is work to be done; she applied for the entire amount of \$1500. Would like a kiosk with signs by the little parking lot. Ralph and Janet will set up a meeting with Victor to discuss damaged signage.
- Earth Day – Many activities planned. Ralph will lead Earth Day walk along with Larry Fink.
- Crawford Hill – Ralph said a half dozen children from Indian Hill came to the TC meeting. They presented a petition signed by 200 students to the town prompted by a Social Studies teacher’s assignment. At the last Township Committee meeting the mayor

announced that they went to court to get clarification on some of the issues. Nokia sold the property to a private entity Crawford Hill LLC, but in the purchase and sale agreement, Nokia retained certain rights to the antenna, who owns the antenna, and if they made use of eminent domain, is the Horn impacted by that. It could take some time before they get clarification.

- Trees/Clearcutting – Tree Ordinance; Ralph stated that the town received a grant for funding to do a study many years ago. They collected ordinances from 30-40 towns. They found out that there was extensive litigation about tree ordinances. The New Jersey Builders Association was suing towns that had Tree ordinances. The judge appointed a special master to resolve the issues. Using the grant money they received for the town, they hired a professional planner who was also the special master who knew what the complaints were and how to get around them. After multiple meetings with the public and Township Committee, the developer agreement was adopted. Extensive discussion was had about the homeowner policy, which they felt intruded on homeowner's rights. It became a staffing and enforcement issue, so that portion of the ordinance was never adopted. Steve Winters wanted to strengthen the steep slope ordinance. He has drafted a revision to say steep slopes also applied to minor subdivisions. It was forwarded to Kate Keller, P.P., to help define steep slopes.

Ralph said he recently received an email from NJDEP that they have a draft tree ordinance that every town in the state must adopt. He feels the draft "stormwater ordinance" is fuzzy and vague. We will wait to see what they come up with.

Planning Board Applications

Somerset Holmdel Development, 101 Crawfords Corner Road,

Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan & Sign Variance, Block 11, Lots 38.03-38.07

PB2023-A Applicant seeks variance relief to amend road entrance monument retail signage to digital signage on Bell Works property. *Public hearing scheduled for May 2, 2023*

At each of the entrances there is a sign with their logo on it. They want to change to a new sign 18 inches thick as opposed to 12 inches now. LED/TV type screens to have things in color. Chiung-Yin said there are houses affected by the signs, and she can see the sign from her windows. In addition, she feels it is light pollution. Janet said the signs are a distraction and a danger to the people driving. Janet and Chiung-Yin to draft a letter opposing the application.

Heavenly Estates, Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision, Block 2, Lots 2 and 26 ~

PB-21-663 Proposed subdivision of two (2) existing lots (92.4 acres) into eighteen (18) residential lots, three (3) open space lots (to be dedicated to a Homeowners' Association) and one (1) large lot to remain undeveloped; property located along the eastbound side of Newman Springs Road (Rt 520), opposite Vonage Technology Center, and is within the Rural Conservation District (R-4R) Zone. *Plan Revisions currently out for review with Board professionals*

Ralph reviewed the revised plans and said there was an improvement over the last plans, but still some environmental issues. He will speak with the Board Engineer about the revisions and will begin a draft memo on behalf of the HEC.

9:00 p.m. Ralph left the meeting as he is recused from Zoning Board matters

Zoning Board Applications

William Aurnhammer, 111 Red Hill Road, Block 21, Lot 12 in the R40A

Zone~ZBA2023-3 Applicant requires variance relief to install a 5-foot high, swing gate at the back entrance to his property where a gate height of 4-foot high is permitted. *Public hearing not yet scheduled.*

No HEC input.

Roberts of Holmdel, LLC, 161 Highway 34, Block 13, Lots 2.02 & 2.02 QFARM in the R-4R Zone ~ ZBA2023-4 Applicant seeks variance relief to operate a commercial garden center/nursery and retail farm market. The retail farm market is a permitted accessory use for farms and agriculture. The proposed retail farm market exceeds the permitted building coverage for retail farm markets. Applicant also requires bulk variance relief for pre-existing non-conforming conditions including minimum front yard setback, minimum buffer for commercial use, minimum parking setbacks and minimum driveway set back from the property line. *Application currently out for completeness review/public hearing not scheduled.*

HEC has concern with lot coverage issues. Loretta to forward engineering review letter.

Adjournment

There being no further business at 9:17 p.m. **motion** by Tony seconded by Gary to adjourn. Motion carried on voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Coscia
Loretta Coscia
Secretary

Proceedings recorded
Approved May 10, 2023