

**FRANKLIN LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MINUTES – June 20, 2016**

In Attendance: Commissioners Carole Holden, Michael Colombo, Larissa Symbouras, Lana Sherman King, Skip Williamson, and Susan Barbuto. Green Team members Robert Clarke and Michael. Council Liason Ann Swist, Mayor Frank Bivona. Recycling Coordinator Liz Morris.

Absent: Gary Sheppard, Don Scine, and Moira Murphy

The June meeting of the Franklin Lakes Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:05 p.m. and held in the municipal building on Monday, June 20, 2016. The minutes of the previous meeting were not read, but were approved as written.

Mayor Bivona spoke to the minutes:

The borough has ordinances which are public and have been in effect for many years; over the years we've enhanced them. We're a town that has large lots, and there are many that are more than 1 acre, some as much as 5-6 acres. Rules governing things like coverage ratios (no more than 25% impervious, including walkways), height limitations, setbacks, tree requirements. Our allowed ratio is very conservative/low when compared with other towns. That's Franklin Lakes' zoning and changing the zoning to anything larger would make almost every house in town noncompliant or preclude most homes from adding improvements.

The mayor has been told we're one of the toughest towns in approving any building application the town receives, as we want to ensure that there's no increase in impervious coverage.

John Wittekund is our code enforcement officer, who came to Franklin Lakes from Allendale. He and Boswell Engineering review every application that comes in, pursuant to New Jersey's laws and the ordinances of Franklin Lakes.

Any construction requires that the builder provides plans, gets tree permits to remove tree each tree, and submit to a thorough process to get approval. Often, Franklin Lakes requires that homeowners and developers set up escrow accounts or a tree bond to ensure the promised trees are being planted, etc. If the plans as approved are not adhered to, Franklin Lakes does fine people and issue stop work orders. This entails a three-step process: (1) notice of violation, (2) if it's not fixed, a summons is issued, and (3) a summons requires a court appearance.

Franklin Lakes also conducts regular inspections of construction, using a standard inspection checklist. The borough engineer has to visit each property 2-3 times to check the foundation; code officials inspect the electric and plumbing; someone from the shade

tree commission will inspect. Before a certificate of occupancy is issued, the builder has to obtain certifications from electric, plumbing, board of health, septic, etc.

As to the house next to Gary Sheppard, this is also across the street from Mayor Bivona. The pipe that was mentioned as a concern during the May meeting is not a septic pipe. There are 3 storm seepage tanks in the back of the house, which is normal on new construction. This allows seepage of water from drains back into the ground rather than down the street and into storm drains. That house was actually fined/summoned/noticed for other violations. The gutters/leads and overflow and are completely legal, however, and there are no health code violations.

With regard to subdividable properties in town; if a home is on five acres in an area that's zoned for one acre, it can be divided as long as the plans are workable for the area. Many of our cul de sacs in town were subdivisions.

A current example exists: There is a three-acre property with an owner that wants to divide into two. Part of the property has a pond, but the ordinance says that all of the land is considered, even the unbuildable portion such as a pond. Therefore, as long as the owner can build a house and septic tank on that buildable portion while adhering to our ordinances with all the setback requirements, etc., they can develop. That will determine the allowable size of the house. If we didn't count the wetlands as part of the property in determining the size of a lot for building purposes, it would impact a great number of homes in Franklin Lakes and reduce property values because it would make those homes nonconforming when it comes to building or selling. Everything an owner wanted to do would require approval and variances. We do not allow anyone to disturb wetlands; there are very strict rules from the DEP that builders are required to abide by. They have to go to the DEP and get approval from them showing the location of the wetlands and setbacks, which severely restricts what can be done on that property. Franklin Lakes itself doesn't make any judgment or interpretation regarding those laws; it's left to the DEP. If anyone comes in with plans that disturb wetlands or are within the required setback area, those plans will not be approved.

“Builders Remedy” only has to do with density of construction, not with town ordinances. The builders would still have to comply with all of our ordinances. The remedy allows for higher density on our land in terms of zoning, but cannot override ordinances that are related to something other than density.

If we as an Environmental Commission think anything in the checklist supplied by J.R. Frank during the May meeting is worthwhile and not already an ordinance (a lot are) then we can bring it to the mayor and council to consider creating new ordinances.

Chair's Report:

June 21 at 6 p.m. is grand opening of Parsons Pond Park. Parsons Pond Drive will belong to Franklin Lakes, but Express Scripts will still maintain their property. As you enter off Old Mill, the Express Scripts property and trail is on the left. Franklin Lakes'

property begins halfway through the property to the right where the ballfields are. The town has adopted set of rules, which does not include boating on those two ponds yet. Parking is by the ballfields. The daycare facility there will belong to Franklin Lakes, and is a state of the art facility.

Sustainable Jersey Actions – The Methodist church got permission from Franklin Lakes to have a 20x20' community garden at the edge of McBride Field. Carole visited the location with Reverend Philip and Rose Pelligri. If a double fence is installed, rather than an 8' fence, which isn't permitted in Franklin Lakes, it will be is effective to keep out deer. Carole talked to Greg about doing a garden plot of 30x30', and plans to go stake out the proposed plot and then have Greg check to make sure would be acceptable. The garden could be expanded in the future by returning to the town to get permission. Food grown on the original plot will go to CUMAC. If the plot is expanded, the food on the additional area could go to a group of the requestor's choosing.

Lana: (Bike trails) - Lana took a look with Carole at the paths behind the municipal building, but is not really sure if those are conducive to biking because of the short rocky trails (Mike agrees they're not kid friendly). Then they walked the nature preserve and determined that they would need to rework trails, move big rocks, and smooth the trails over, to make them beginner/intermediate friendly (a Nature Preserve bike trail would be intermediate level). Mike sees the new Parsons Pond area as a good place for kids to go ride their bikes without being on the roads, if the bridges could be widened, etc. To draw more people to existing trails, they can be submitted to bike trail apps so people see they're designated as areas for biking. Carole suggested a bike rack. Mike said that we can also add trail markers with location numbers to give if a rider is in trouble and needs to call for help. Next Carole and Lana will meet with Patrick, and Mike can lay it out for them more specifically, what would be needed to do this. Get kids safer spots to ride, start small.

Franklin Lakes is working on building a dog park – the town has been approved for grant money. Making this project a part of Sustainable Jersey was discussed, as well as having an open house when it first opens, with vendors, etc. The town will also repair tennis courts as part of the same project.

Free Rabies Clinic: This would be a day for free rabies shots to encourage dog owners to license their dogs. Tyco would get involved in giving the shots, theoretically.

Town Fair: September 24. Town fair committee – Liz & Carole (and Moira). Liz has lots of ideas, and wants to use the game wheel like last year. We have plenty of stuff for basic displays, as well as to jazz it up, plus stress balls, pencils, and Frisbees as giveaways. Recycling's doing well in town, but we haven't done anything in the public eye for a while, so we should bring this back as our theme, and make another push on the town's recycling cans. We're planning another recycling can giveaway again (and it was suggested that first X people get them free). We're currently selling about 10 a month. Ann has an idea to talk to real estate agents about buying them as a promotion to give to new residents they sell homes to. Liz also has a plan to promote the new clothing

recycling bins at the fair. Sue: We should also tell residents about our newer initiatives – dog park, community garden, new park, bike trails, etc. Allison will be contacted to let her know there's the option to join the EC at the booth.

Water (Mike) – Remediation has started on the Dow chemical spill, and there will be an impact to downstream waters. He plans to discuss this at the next meeting.

Public Education and Outreach (Sue) – Sue attended the Sustainable Jersey Fair on June 15. They had all kinds of updates on Sustainable Jersey. On September 29 or thereabouts, ANJEC is holding their summit. It will be good to see what other towns are doing, and get ideas for our town. Sue learned of a clearinghouse where people who have home gardens with excess can donate it and send it to a food pantry (Ampleharvest.org). Ann suggested putting a blurb about Ample Harvest in the eblast. NPR has been doing a campaign lately to turn off your engine not let your car idle. It was suggested that the town could have signage “please don't idle.” Another idea was to contact companies regarding their packaging to encourage them to use biodegradable packaging. Also, there's a law in the works in NJ to charge \$0.05 on every plastic bag statewide.

Energy (Skip) – N/A

Recycling (Liz and Don) – Liz is currently looking for book drop box companies, and is progressing; she found Planet Aid and some for-profit companies that will do it.

Styrofoam packing peanuts can be returned to UPS.

For Sustainable Jersey, Liz is doing writeup regarding our shred days. That's worth 10 points and we've been doing them forever (6 since Liz has been Recycling Coordinator).

We're averaging at least 100 tons/month in recycling. The income has been steady because the price per ton has decreased, but is going back up. It's time for another push on the recycling front because it's been out of people's minds for a while.

Shred day this time gathered 6.8 tons, almost as much as all of 2015.

We started the recycling compliance program in October, but didn't take off. The one driver who was championing the program wasn't working for 6 months, but now he's back so Gaeta is back on board. Liz is going to check the residences that have already received stickers and impress on them that they really should recycle and why. Liz gets many more calls now with genuine questions about how to recycle.

Sue: What about perfectly good items left on the side of the road for people to take? If they don't get taken, they end up in waste stream, and is there something we can do about that, to educate people? The Facebook “virtual yard sale” groups were discussed, such as Franklin Lakes Virtual Yard Sale, and FLOW Virtual Garage Sale.

Planning Board (Gary) – N/A

Old Business

N/A

New Business

N/A

Action Issues

N/A

The next meeting is set for August 15, at 7 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Larissa Symbouras