

Union Township Environmental Commission Minutes of the November 13, 2007 Regular Meeting

The November 13, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Union Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The notice of meeting as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier-News satisfied the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act, and was also posted in the Municipal Building, on the Union Township website and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

I. **Roll call:**

Present: Bob Beylickjian, Kathleen Corcoran, Alan Ford, Bill Harclerode, Stephen Hurford, Michele McBride, Robert Nargi, Sandy Stiger,

Absent: Brian Kirkpatrick

Public: Christina Bilinski, Daniel Bilinski, Darrel Farkus, Matt Severino, Joop Vester,
(Mr. Harclerode, as Alternate I, voted in Mr. Kirkpatrick's absence)

II. **Approval of Minutes:**

Approval of the minutes from the October 9, 2007 meeting was moved by Mr. Harclerode and seconded by Ms. Stiger, and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Mr. Nargi stated that we will make changes to the minutes for this and future meetings at the subsequent meeting, and would no longer circulate the minutes for comments in advance. This procedure is to make sure that draft minutes are ready within seven days of a meeting.

III. **Old Business:**

None

IV. **Correspondence:**

None

V. **New Business:**

1. Mr. Hurford expressed concern about availability of records and correspondence, particularly with respect to the Sidney Brook project. Mr. Nargi stated that he believed that the materials had been provided in the past. Access to the UTEC office, files and email records was then discussed. Mr. Nargi stated that the office would be available during normal business hours, with the key available from the Township Clerk. The files will be unlocked, but the desk will be kept locked because certain sensitive documents pertaining to open space acquisition are stored there. Additional materials, such as the Sidney Brook project binder, are located on top of the cabinets.
2. Access to email correspondence was also discussed. Mr. Nargi stated that all emails are printed out and placed in the appropriate files and binders. The Union Township email address should be used for all email correspondence. Also, conversations through email are not appropriate, and should be deferred to regular UTEC meetings.
3. A question was asked concerning the appointment of subcommittees and subcommittee chairs. Mr. Nargi stated that he usually made these appointments in accordance with the bylaws.
4. Mr. Ford suggested that any materials that were removed from the office be signed out, so that others would be aware they were borrowed.

VI. **Chairman's Report:**

1. Mr. Nargi reported that the well testing program was complete, with about 30 participants. Mrs. Bilinski noted that it was not well publicized and suggested that alternatives, such as email be considered. She also suggest that a direct contact method for all residents be established, as the website and newsletter don't always reach everyone.
2. Mr. Nargi reported that the draft Mulhockaway Stormwater Management and Stream Restoration Plan has been received. The report contains six priority recommendations. Comments are due by December 1. It was moved by Mr. Ford, seconded by Mr. Bylickjian and approved by a 7-0 vote that Mr. Harclerode be appointed as chair of a subgroup to develop comments on behalf of UTEC for submission by the deadline. Mr. Harclerode invited others to provide him with input. The draft report will be available in the UTEC office and is available on the NJWSA website (<http://www.njwsa.org/WPU/mulhockWRFigs.htm>)

VII. **Committee Reports:**

Open Space Committee:

1. Mr. Nargi reported he had discussed the title search RFP with the Township Committee and the Tax Assessor. The assessor has all deeds on file, so we can access them in the Township Office. The Open Space Committee will review these records and see what is feasible as a next step. The RFP will not be issued at this time.
2. Ms. Stiger reported that the committee is continuing to work on identifying conservation easements. Support is needed to review all the records.
3. The committee is looking at how the LUCARS database might be used. The hope is that all conservation easements can be recorded in the database, and then readily accessed by township officials to support their work, such as the zoning, construction and the engineer by making the easement information easily available.
4. Ms. Stiger questioned how we get information from the deed. Mr. Nargi stated that the deeds contain drawings and descriptions of the easements. Mr. Hurford stated that older deeds might not include maps and drawings. Further study of the system and available documents is needed, and a study of how to get appropriate software and hardware is needed as well.

Equestrian Trails:

Mr. Beylickjian and Mr. Kirkpatrick have developed a plan for the signage, including maps of the sign locations. This information will be presented to the Trail Association before presentation to the Township Committee.

Planning Board:

1. UTEC considered the letter to the Union Township Planning Board prepared by Mr. Kirkpatrick with recommendations for the Rolling Hills development. Concern was expressed that the application and plans were not available for review at this meeting. After discussion, Mr. Harclerode moved and Ms. McBride seconded a motion to send the letter to the Planning Board, with three non-substantive edits. The motion was approved by a 5-2 vote, with Mr. Beylickjian and Mr. Hurford dissenting.
2. Plans and applications will be available in the UTEC office for review by members. Mr. Harclerode and Mr. Severino suggested that the plans also be available at UTEC meetings for discussion.

Property Management:

1. Mr. Beylickjian noted that progress with the roofer had occurred. A plan for replacement will be developed and discussed with the Township Committee. The job will be done piecemeal over the winter, due to availability of materials.
2. Mr. Nargi reported that the septic system on the white apartment building has failed. This is now being considered by the Township Committee.

Noise:

1. Mr. Harclerode moved on behalf of the committee that an engine-braking ordinance identical to that of Hope Township be adopted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stiger and approved by a 6-0 vote, with Mr. Hurford abstaining.
2. Mr. Harclerode made several recommendations for action as follows:
 - a. That a meeting be held with NJDOT to discuss:
 - i. Having the Bloomsbury Truck Inspection Station add muffler inspections, and that the station be staffed 24/7,
 - ii. That I-78 be repaved with lower noise asphalt, and
 - iii. Reducing traffic detouring on township roads when I-78 gets backed up in the morning.
 - b. That a meeting be held with NJTPA regarding:
 - i. The urgent priority for repaving I-78, and
 - ii. Ways to reduce truck traffic on I-78, noting that they are currently focused on reducing car traffic only.
 - c. That Bill contact Sharon McClain, Sr. Planner, Hunterdon County for recommendations, and George Muller, Freeholder, regarding the urgency of repaving I-78 to advocate for repaving sooner at a December 17 meeting.

Mr. Ford moved and Mr. Hurford seconded a motion to approve the plan above. The motion was approved 7-0.

Mr. Severino noted that discussions have been taking place between the Township and NJDOT concerning the dangerous roadway conditions of I-78, and the current priority would have the paving done in 2009.

Sidney Brook 319 Project:

1. Mr. Nargi reported that a meeting took place today (November 13) with representatives (Mr. Hurford, Mr. Nargi and Mr. Ford) from UTEC, NJDEP, NJWSA and Princeton Hydro. No SBWA staff attended.

The principal discussion centered on the type of visual assessment to be done. NJDEP has a new protocol they require be used which requires more access and different recording of results. NJWSA recommends a different and upgraded visual assessment protocol, which includes some different items. NJDEP will decide on a plan based on input from NJWSA and SBWA (due this week). Tasks to be performed by NJWSA and SBWA will also be determined.

The method of obtaining permission from property owners was discussed. UTEC requires that the notification to the property owner include a positive reply from the property owner before the property is accessed.

Mr. Nargi said that we communicated at the meeting that we didn't want to identify "hot spots" per se in the plan, although DEP does use that terminology.

2. Mr. Hurford also requested that time sheets be provided to the UTEC office by Friday, November 16.

Newsletter:

1. Ms. McBride will draft the newsletter. She requested that members contact her with ideas for inclusion, and noted that some ideas have already been given to her. Some Township directory information will also be included. Township departments are also being asked for input. A February release is targeted.
2. Ms. McBride reported that sponsorships from local businesses are being considered to defray the costs. Expenses may also be treated as in-kind for the Sidney Brook grant.
3. Also, an opt-in email list will be considered for distributing UTEC information to residents.

VIII. **Hearing of Citizens:**

Mr. and Mrs. Bilinski and Mr. Farkus made statements of concern regarding truck traffic and noise, and were supportive of UTEC's activity on this issue. Mr. Belinski noted that on I-70 in Colorado, there were signs restricting engine braking.

IX. **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Commission will be Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 7:00 pm at the municipal building.

X. **Adjournment:**

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:57 PM. It was moved by Mr. Ford, seconded by Mr. Harclerode, and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan Ford, Secretary