

VOORHEES TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

April 3, 2012

The Chairperson called the meeting order. It was stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act and has been duly published and noticed as required by law."

FLAG SALUTE:

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Atkinson, Mr. Wu, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Garbowski, Mr. Hale

Absent: Dr. Sherbine, Mr. Gaffney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mrs. Schwartz makes a motion to approve the minutes from March 13, 2012 meeting as distributed. Seconded by Mr. Garbowski. Remaining present board members in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review of Rutgers Environmental Park Proposals – Mr. Hale stated that he and Mrs. Schwartz attended the presentation by VECEF in partnership with Rutgers Center of Urban Environmental Sustainability (CUES). In which they invited the Rutgers graduate students of landscape architecture to develop four preliminary design ideas for the park. These plans were presented to Township Committee and the public. They highlighted aspects of all the plans at the meeting. She stated that Township Committee is looking for input from the VEC. Mrs. Schwartz also stated that it was apparent by the study that the students did a commendable job. They took into consideration storm water, groundwater flow, the plantings and depths of the root systems. She feels the only aspect that was not addressed was the cost and maintenance of the projects. Mrs. Schwartz stated that the VEC's role will be to modify the proposals and make a recommendation to Township Committee a more practical and functional park with minimal cost. Mr. Hale stated that the size of the solar field has been reduced from what was originally proposed to 25% coverage. Township Committee wants the VEC to compile a report including which elements from which designs they like and why. From there, Township Committee will meet with Rutgers CUE and present a final design based on VEC report and public feedback.

Mr. Hale stated the new park should not compete with Connelly Park or contain a lot of recreational elements. The new design should be more informal area and natural.

Mrs. Schwartz stated that in her opinion some of the design would be more well suited for an urban environment. She stated the "Succession" design was the more natural of the four and would change with the seasons. There was also discussion on whether the solar fields would be able to be accessed freely by the public and the safety and liability standpoints. Mrs. Schwartz stated there would be no concessions at the visitor center. Mr. Hale stated that some of the plans over treat the lake. He suggested keeping it natural.

Mrs. Atkinson stated that from an environmental perspective a pond is not maintained by bulkheads.

Mrs. Schwartz stated that she would like to see native species of plants that will attract wildlife such as insects and birds. She also stated that in regards to the walking path we would prefer materials that are conducive to minimal cost and long term durability. Mrs. Brown asks if the designs are handicapped acceptable. Mr. Hale stated they are ADA compliant.

Mrs. Schwartz suggests starting our recommendations that the conceptual design that approaches what would be most suitable for the community would be the "Succession by Design" with significant modifications. That would include native species of vegetation specifically wildflower gardens with the foresight to make this not only esthetically pleasing for the community to walk around but good for migrating birds, indigenous wildlife and insects. Mr. Hale also stated that the visitor center should be scaled down and have more of a pavilion/amphitheater and more along the lines of open air concept. There will also be no food concessions. There was also discussion of accessibility and parking. Mr. Hale stated the solar panels will be located on the right side of site. The VEC is in agreement to keep it a totally passive area. Mr. Wu stated that he would like to see the design attract the public as a place to relax and meditate. He suggests keeping the design simple and making the public aware of its use.

VEC took brief recess to examine design models in foyer.

Mr. Hale opens meeting to the public. Seeing no public comment Mr. Hale makes a motion to close public portion, seconded by Mr. Garbowski.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES:

Mrs. Brown informed the VEC that at the public has started using the Staffordshire Farm location for Frisbee golf courts.

Mrs. Atkinson informs the VEC that New Jersey American Water presentation is scheduled for the June 12th meeting.

Mr. Hale informs the VEC that grants have been applied for CME to prepare the ERI.

Meeting was adjourned.

Wendy Flite/VEC Secretary