

**Elk Township Environmental Commission (ETEC)**  
**August 9, 2006**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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**Attendees:**

ETEC Members: Frank Goss, Teal Jefferis, Donna Nicholson, Jeannie White and Donna Weiss

Elk Twp Committee: Don Brovero and Mayor Bill Rainey

**I. July Meeting Minutes Approval**

- a. Teal Jefferis moved to approve the July 12, 2006 minutes, Donna Nicholson Seconded motion. The July 12, 2006 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**II. Guests**

- a. Weona Pond Developers

Teal Jefferis summarized the ETEC's role in the planning/zoning process.

Mr. and Mrs. Conte, of Conte Developers, summarized their intentions to improve the current 5 homes on the 7 acre property, subdivide the properties and sell as single family homes. The Conte's purchased the property on May 16, 2005 and met with members of the Elk Township Committee, including the planner Mark Schuster on May 18, 2005 (after they purchased the property).

***Summary of Property:***

- When the property was purchased in May 2005, there were 7 homes on the property; the Conte's removed 2 of the homes and 5 remain. One home is currently occupied by Mr. Bill Hughes.
- Mr. Hughes has been in the home since 1996. The house was built around 1970, based on aerial photographs.
- Mr. Bill Hughes utilizes an underground tank to hold his septic and it is periodically emptied as needed. One of the homes has an approved raised septic field and a drilled potable well. Currently, the remaining 3 homes have no septic systems.
- 4 of the 5 homes have hand-driven wells that were installed in the 1960's.
- The 5 homes are heated with oil heat; there are 3 aboveground oil tanks inside buildings and 2 oil aboveground tanks located outside buildings.

***Summary of Development Intentions:***

- Conte's have a Letter of Interpretation (LOI) from NJDEP detailing the delineated wetlands and buffer zone for development. The Conte's

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indicated that the LOI has typographical errors and is being revised by the NJDEP.

- B&D Construction of Vineland has inspected the homes and will testify at the September 20, 2006 Planning/Zoning Board meeting that there are no structure problems with the 5 standing homes. The damage to the homes is described by the Conte's as "vandalism damage".
- Conte's want to subdivide the property into 5 lots (i.e., 1 per existing home), repair the existing dwelling, install appropriate septic and potable wells and sell the 5 homes.

***Discussion:***

Teal Jefferis asked if any mold evaluations were completed. Per the Conte's – No.

Donna Nicholson and Teal Jefferis followed up with concerns about lead paint and asbestos given the age of the existing dwellings.

Donna Nicholson asked if there are any documented problems with the raised septic system. Contes knew of none, but the system has not been used for years.

Donna Nicholson asked if there was a discharge line from the homes with no septic to the pond as there was historical concern of direct dumping. The Conte's were not aware of any pipeline.

Donna Weiss asked about the historical operations associated with Lot D that was purported to be an elevator business. The Conte's indicated they thought the use of the property was limited to storage for the former owner's elevator business only.

Donna Weiss asked if the Conte's had an environmental assessment done before they bought the property; they did not.

Further Ms. Weiss asked if, based on the delineated wetland buffer zones whether the septic and well could be safely located outside the buffer zone (s) and an appropriate distance from one another. The Conte's indicated that they had no reason to believe this could not be done but that would be determined by the county in the approval process.

The Conte's want to do the right thing and intend to get approved septic, wells, etc. They are concerned with the environment and want to do the right thing.

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b. Lake Garrison Environmental Committee (LGEC)

LGEC Attendees: Mr. Len Knox, Mrs. Judy Knox and Mrs. Martha Nealer (V.P. Board of Directors)

Mr. Knox gave a brief summary that included:

- The area was a swamp at one time and the pond was installed (in the 1960's) to dewater the swamp so the existing homes could be built.
- LGEC does not believe any type of septic on these properties can be engineered to work properly and not create an environmental problem.
- LGEC believes a full environmental assessment is needed.
- LGEC understands from a NJDEP seminar they attended that this area may be in a water use area; Gloucester County is a recharge area for potable groundwater.
- LGEC wants to protect Lake Garrison.
- There is indication and hearsay that illegal dumping occurred on the property, not since the Conte's have owned it but prior to May 2005.

Mrs. Knox is concerned with endangered species in the area. She indicates that there are 4 breeding pair of bald eagles on the Lake, osprey, bog turtle and other species that are on the NJ endangered species list. Further, there may be vegetation present that require protection.

LGEC has not notified U.S. Federal Fish and Wildlife and is in the process of contacting NJDEP. These species may not be currently in the NJDEP mapping.

***Discussion:***

Frank Goss indicated to LGEC that the ETEC is starting to complete an environmental inventory for Elk and we are interested in these issues moving forward.

LGEC would like the ETEC to notify NJDEP and US Fish & Wildlife about the potential endangered species in conjunction with them in hopes that will move the State and Federal evaluation forward.

Teal asked that LGEC copy us on their correspondence to NJDEP and Federal agencies and vice versa.

Teal and Donna asked if LGEC had first hand knowledge of the historical dumping. Len indicated that he had not but had heard from others.

LGEC and the Contes left the meeting at 8:30pm.

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**III. New Ordinances**

- a. Tree Ordinance – Commission discussed the elements of the Bordentown and Moorestown tree ordinance's that would be beneficial to Elk Township.

Jeannie White summarized her understanding of current planning/zoning requirements for tree removal. Currently there are no tree or landscaping ordinances, but these items are on the P/Z docket of things to be done.

All members agreed that the Moorestown was a better fit for what we want and there were good elements of the Bordentown ordinance to be merged with the Moorestown ordinance to provide this basis of Elk's tree ordinance.

Mr. Swanson (public participant) asked about removing cut down trees in the ordinance. ETEC will consider and include this in our draft ordinance such that there is a time limit for keeping cut tree on a property.

**IV. Checklist for Land Development Review**

- a. Status of Checklist

Don Brovero handed out a copy of the P/Z checklist as it currently exists.

ETEC will get an example letter for Endangered Species and Wildlife to include in Elk's P/Z checklist.

- b. Nitrate Dilution Model

Teal Jefferis asked two individuals with expertise into the model have been asked to come discuss the model's pros/cons and application.

**V. Current Environmental Issues in Town**

- a. Sale of Cedar Bridge Property – Case #06-01-10-1129-48

Donna Nicholson contacted NJDEP; NJDEP indicated that the property has not emergent issue as far as the state is concerned.

Donna tried to contact Jim Woods at the Gloucester County Health Dept, left a voice message. Donna will follow-up with Mr. Woods.

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b. Silver Lake Estates

Issue is soil erosion. Appears that appropriate soil erosion control measures may not be in place, Teal Jefferis contacted the Gloucester County Soil Conservation District to follow-up.

c. Raccoon Creek-Fazzio's on Route 77

Issue is soil erosion, storm water changes due to site work and impacts to the creek. There is a significant amount of earth moving being conducted on the property. There is an excavator located between the pond and Raccoon Creek. It is unknown if the property has an agricultural exemption; the county is following up on that aspect.

**VI. Miscellaneous Update Area**

a. Research into Grants for Wildlife Parks

Billie Chambers did research and provided all members of ETEC with summary. Billie was not present so further discussion was tabled for the next ETEC meeting. Billie had indicated she was in contact with experts to provide education to ETEC; this will be fit into future meeting.

b. NJDEP/Local Contact Database

Don Brovero started access database of our contacts. Teal Jefferis provided Don with additional contacts to be included in that database.

c. Education

- Gloucester County Soil Conservation District to be at September 2006 meeting
- Nitrate-dilution model experts will be at October 2006 meeting.

**VII. Open Public Discussion**

None.

The following other action items are to be addressed:

- I. Teal Jefferis will get examples of text for US Fish and Wildlife, Endangered Species letters for the P/Z check list.
- II. ETEC will draft a summary of the Conte Development project and our concerns for submittal to P/Z before their September 20, 2006 meeting. Teal will make first draft and distribute for comment to the rest of the commission.

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- III. ETEC to research Elk Township documentation of past use and dumping at the Conte Property for consideration as to future actions on that property.
- IV. Teal will start an ordinance for tree removal and all ETEC members will comment and edit prior to submittal to P/Z by their October 2006 meeting
- V. Donna Nicholson to contact Anna Foley to see if ETEC can have 5 minutes at the P/Z Sept. 20, 2006 meeting for an introduction.
- VI. Teal will schedule the Gloucester County Soil Conservation District for the September 12, 2006 meeting and Nitrate dilution Model experts for the October 11, 2006 meeting.
- VII. Donna will follow-up with Mr. Woods at the County Health Dept. regarding the Cedar Bridge property.
- VIII. Donna to follow-up on soil controls at the Silver Lake Estates development and Frank Goss at the Fazzio property on Route 77.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 pm

Next ETEC meeting will be at 7:30pm, Wednesday, September 12, 2006.