

Elk Township Environmental Commission (ETEC)
October 11, 2006
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

ETEC Members: Teal Jefferis, Donna Nicholson, Lillian (Billie) Chambers, Larry Christy and Donna Weiss

Elk Twp Committee: Don Brovero and Mayor Bill Rainey

I. September Meeting Minutes Approval

- a. Donna Nicholson moved to approve the September 13, 2006 minutes, Donna Weiss Seconded motion. The September 13, 2006 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Guests

- a. Erik Mollenauer – Gloucester County Nature Club

Mr. Erik Mollenauer was introduced by Billie Chambers. Erik is a member of Gloucester County Nature Club and former member of the Pitman Environmental Commission. Erik explained what the Gloucester County Nature Club does and how the Elk Township Environmental Commission may interact and work with the Club to benefit the environment in Elk Township, and potentially partner together for any programs in the Township.

The County Nature Club is creating a book on the natural areas and parks of Gloucester County and would like input on those areas of Elk Township that we would like to add to the book.

Billie asked Erik where the Elk Township Environmental Commission could go for funding of various environmental projects. Erik indicated that he would need specifics to direct us appropriately.

It was agreed that Billie Chambers would be the Elk Township Environmental Commission's direct contact with Erik for future correspondence.

The Gloucester County Nature Club meets the Second Thursday of each month.

- b. Bob Carter – Marathon Consultants & Sandy Mersky – SJ Engineers

Mr. Carter and Mr. Mersky were invited by Teal Jefferis to discuss the Nitrate Dilution Model and impacts on septic system design and lot size/development. Mr. Mersky provided an overview of septic systems, particularly maintenance and alternative systems to improve operations, as well as septic system impact on lot size relevant to the Nitrate Dilution Model.

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Mr. Carter provided information on how the Nitrate Dilution Model was developed and applied by the NJDEP.

Mr. Mersky indicated that Elk Township has the smallest lot sizes in Gloucester County and that is problematic for separation distances needed for installing septic systems. He indicated there are mechanical ways of controlling nitrogen from septic systems, referred to these methods as "advanced treatment units". Gloucester County is considering implementation of a county-wide septic system maintenance ordinance.

Discussion:

Billie Chambers asked about the 2 main issues with Elk and septic, which are high water table and high clay content. Mr. Mersky indicated that septic systems could only be installed if the groundwater table was at least 4 feet deep. As for clay soils, the issue would be septic system performance and would require another form of artificial treatment. He did note, that if a standard septic system would not meet the requirements, an alternative system could not be installed. A home must meet the standards requirements.

In closing, Mr. Mersky indicated that he did not think a Nitrate Dilution Model Ordinance was needed, but instead recommended a maintenance ordinance similar to the draft Gloucester County ordinance.

Mr. Carter went over the NJDEP's 50 or more Nitrate Dilution Model. He indicated that South Harrison used the 50 or more model in conjunction with the Builders League of South Jersey, Franklin Township is recommending use of the model and Pilesgrove use GSR-32 on a case-by-case basis. A township can use the Nitrate Dilution Model to revise a Master Plan

Mayor Rainey asked about a project in the Township that had 49 homes approved, which did not require the more than 50 model and now wants to add 3 more lots. Would the project now require the model be run because there are a total of 52 homes. Mr. Mersky and Mr. Carter indicated that if the question was posed to NJDEP, the NJDEP would require that the model be run.

Larry Christy and Donna Weiss indicated that maintenance of township septic systems would be more beneficial than implementing a Nitrate Dilution Model ordinance, and we need to evaluate how we apply due diligence.

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With respect to maintenance of septic systems, Larry Christy recommended bringing a septic maintenance company to a future Commission meeting to discuss how we may pass maintenance information onto Elk residents.

III. Old Business

- a. Tree Ordinance – A motion to approve the Tree Ordinance was made by Donna Nicholson. The motion was seconded by Donna Weiss and approved unanimously. Donna Weiss will present the Tree Ordinance to the Planning/Zoning Board at their October 18, 2006 meeting.

TDR Summit – Teal and Don Brovero attended the Transfer Development Rights (TDR) Summit. TDR is similar to farmland preservation. Money for this program comes out of developer's costs and not the township's. It is a program whereby farmers sell credits to developers. The intention is to locate homes/development in a more centralized location of town and maintain open areas on the outskirts. However, Elk's development is at a stage where this program would not be beneficial.

IV. Current Environmental Issues in Elk

- a. Stewart Estate/Elephant Swamp Property, titled Remington Tract

Discussed the Remington Tract and its potential use for recreational purposes, such as a walking trail, etc. Don Brovero would like to preserve the land through the Stewart Estate to remove it from the tax rolls and not only benefit the township's environment and open space, but also financially.

It was agreed that we would determine how much land is wetland in the Township and all the lots owned by the Township that may be incorporated into preserved land.

Teal recommended looking into the State's "Rails to Trails" program for the portion of the Remington Tract that is a railroad bed. Further, Teal recommended that all preserved land be deed restricted from potential of future development.

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b. Glassboro/Clayton Road Property

c. Nancy Eckler's home located on Garrison Lake

Nancy Eckler was at the meeting but had to leave before we reached this topic on the agenda. Martha Nealer of the Lake Garrison Commission summarized the issue, which is a section of bulk head on Lake Garrison that is in need of repair. Ms. Eckler and her husband would like to make the repairs themselves, but are not certain of the permits/approvals required. Martha indicated that Lake Garrison Corporation will be paying for the repairs and will go before NJDEP for appropriate approvals.

In addition, Teal Jefferis summarized the bald eagle sightings on Lake Garrison and how Lake Garrison will have to document future sightings as they relate to endangered species regulations.

Finally, Martha provided information to the Commission on the Lake's stream assessment as part of the Gloucester County Watershed survey. Lake Garrison will be doing stream assessment and submitting it to the County.

d. R.J. Pacili Homes, LLC proposed subdivision – Block 6, Lots 14 &16 Ewan Road

Received packet on Friday, October 6, 2006. Teal did a cursory review and summarized the project. RJ Pacili Homes is requesting a variance for clustering. Teal recommended that an evaluation of utilizing standard size lots be provided, as it did not appear as if the clustering approach reduced the amount of site disturbance and preservation of open space.

Donna Nicholson recommended that the Nitrate Dilution Model be run and shown that no detrimental nitrogen levels would result from the additional homes to be installed as part of the requested variance.

Teal will draft a letter in response to the Planning/Zoning Board.

e. Lake Gillman – two properties (Amanto-Block 23, Lot 17 and Wojculewski-Block 23, Lot 38) minor subdivision for septic systems.

Received packet on Friday, October 6, 2006. Teal did cursory review and summarized the project. Two properties in question are having problems with failing septic systems and the applicants are seeking a subdivision of

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the Lake Gilman common land for space to install new septic systems further away from the lake. Concerns were expressed regarding the likelihood that other homes will have similar problems and how the overall common land would be able to support future replacement septic systems and subdivisions. Recommendation for the development of an overall plan to address future septic replacements on the facility was discussed.

Teal will draft a letter in response agreeing with the recommended action of installing the new septic systems, with the provision that the old septic systems would be appropriately abandoned and the lake tested to determine any potential negative impact on water quality due to the failing septic systems.

V. Open Public Discussion

None.

The following other action items are to be addressed:

- I. Teal Jefferis will contact Don Snyder of Gloucester County regarding the draft Septic Maintenance Ordinance.
- II. Teal Jefferis will draft letters to address requests for the Planning/Zoning board meeting of October 18, 2006.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 pm

Next ETEC meeting will be at 7:30pm, Wednesday, November 8, 2006.