

Hammonton Environmental Commission

Minutes

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.

Present: Bachalis, Bethmann, Crowley, Hozik, Menzel

Absent: Carr, Caruso-Cafiso, Campos, Matro

Town Council Liaison:

Hammonton Gazette Reporter: Joe Berenato

Guests: Gina O'Brien, Eric Keys, Christina Comuso

Pledge of Allegiance

Motion to Dispense with Regular Order of Business: Motion: Menzel; Second: Hozik; Approved by Acclamation.

Tree Removal Applications for Residents Present:

1. Cott & Gina O'Brien, 247 Park Ave., 5 trees, 3-5 replacements. Commissioners Crowley & Bethmann thought that trees 1 & 2 were not in bad shape. Trees 1 & 2 were small and tree 5 was a hazard to the neighbor's property. Commissioners Hozik and Menzel agreed with that assessment. Mrs. O'Brien stated that tree 1 has roots that are growing into the garage and causing damage to the structure. Tree #2 is very close to the sewer structure that is there, and the roots are growing into the sewer lines and causing issues. Winds have caused trees 2, 3 & 4 to drop large branches. Mrs. O'Brien also stated that Site-One was going to come mark-out the sewer line because the tree company would not remove trees 1 & 2 due to the closeness without verification of just how close. It was determined that trees 3 & 4 do not need a permit due to being undersized and tree 5 is leaning significantly. Commission members also did not see trees 1 & 2 as being damaging other than maybe to the sewer line. Commissioner Bachalis asked the homeowner if it would be possible to see a copy of the home inspection report and if they could meet the commission members back onsite to inspect the damage to the garage. Motion to approve trees 3, 4 & 5 unconditionally and a conditional approval of trees 1 & 2 upon the review of the home inspection report and the Site-One mark-out: Hozik; Second: Menzel. Approved 5-0.
2. Eric Keys, 422 Bella Vita Court, 3 trees. It was determined that all 3 trees are undersized, and a permit was not needed. The Commission members did note that there are 2 other trees on the property that are dying, and suggested Mr. Keys apply for a permit to have those removed.

Motion to Return to Regular Order of Business: Menzel; Second: Hozik. Approved by Acclamation.

Committee Reports

- Town Council – No report.
- Land Use Board – No report.

- Lake Water – Bachalis; Committee met on 5/9 at the Canoe Club. The plan to do a pre-meeting lake excursion fell apart. John Keenan examined the lake and found a lot of trash. Lake spraying is set to take place in late May or early June.
- Great Egg Harbor River Council – No report
- Green Committee – Menzel; The community garden is open and will be a part of the garden tour on 6/23. Garden talks for the summer are being planned. Sustainable Jersey certification is in process and Sustainable Jersey will be hosting a talk on 6/7. The seed library is going strong. On 6/4 there will be a road clean-up. The green market starts in June and runs through September on Third Thursdays.
- Bike Advisory – No report.
- Parks & Recreation – Bachalis; The spraying of the lake was discussed along with updates on the turf field and pickleball courts.

Tree Removal Applications Continued:

3. Joseph Grasso, 401 W. Orchard St., 1 tree, no replacements. Motion to approve: Hozik; Second: Crowley. Approved 5-0.
4. Lauren Harper, 21 N. Grand St., 2 trees, no replacements. Commission members determined that 1 tree is dead and the other tree was not blocking the stop sign like stated but that tree is not in great shape. Motion to approve both: Hozik; Second: Menzel. Approved 5-0.
5. Jeffrey Haak, 185 Walmer St., 1 tree, no replacements. Motion to approve: Crowley; Second: Menzel. Approved 5-0.
6. Joan Condie, 1 tree, no replacements. Approved by Commission Bachalis prior to the meeting.
7. Luis Perez, 113 Horton St., 1 tree, no replacements. Motion to approve: Crowley; Second: Menzel. Approved 5-0.
8. Vincent Avellino, 117 N. Packard St., 2 trees, replace with a row of hedgerows. Motion to approve 1 tree for removal and 1 tree for trimming: Crowley; Second: Hozik. Approved 5-0.

Old Business

1. Arbor Day recap. Commissioner Bethmann and Mickey Riggins did a presentation at Sooy Elementary school. This year there was no tree giveaway, and a poster contest was held instead. The submissions will be picked up on 5/12 and Commissioners Menzel and Bachalis along with other representatives will judge the submissions and award prizes.
2. Illiano appeal results – Councilman Oliva presided over the appeal & noticed just before the appeal hearing the homeowner had the trees removed already and Mr. Illiano was referred to code enforcement. No results on the outcome yet.
3. Reversal of April Environmental Commission/Parkhurst agreement – The Commission is not allowed to make those types of agreements and the matter has been referred to code enforcement.
4. ANJEC webinar – Will need to check the website to check the date for the upcoming webinar.

New Business

1. The iTree webinars were very informative.
2. PPA Pinelands Science forum series – The 1st one will be held on 5/19 on the subject of climate change.
3. Plan review materials – Dan will provide copies via e-mail.
4. 4. NJDEP model tree ordinance comments – no one had any comments to add to the discussion.

Adjournment: 8:26 p.m.