

Clinton Town Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: April 8, 2018 (Monday)

Time: 7:30pm at Clinton Town Hall, Conference Room

Attendance: Deena Roberts, Christine Adornetto, Veronique Lambert, Michael Humphrey – Town Council Liaison, Tammy Healy– Land Use Board Liaison, John Madden – Chairman. Carol Nemetz – Clinton Township Environmental Commission

Adoption of March 11, 2019 minutes.

River Cleanup will take place April 13, 2019 from 9am-12pm. Deena Roberts is local Coordinator. Mike Humphrey, Tammy Healy and Christine Adornetto to assist (Christine will arrive close to end). Everyone meets at the bridge by the Red Mill at 8:30am.

Review of I-78 noise and environmental issues and follow up action.

The Commission discussion focused on noise mitigation, expanding the area of concern to residents between W. Main St. and I-78, the potential pollution from I-78 runoff on the South Branch, and the sidewalk under I-78 used by school children and residents and the danger of objects coming off the expressway.

a. Noise

Mike Humphrey said it is his understanding that I-78 noise has gotten worse in the last two years after I-78 resurfacing and the misalignment of new asphalt paving with the concrete overpass. He added that I-78 was not engineered for sound barriers because the embankments are too narrow and too steep for barrier construction. Therefore, noise mitigation by sound barriers do not appear to be feasible solution. Mike Humphrey said that State DOT funds would be available to insulate Clinton Public School from I-78 noise. Mike Humphrey said he is reviewing reports on bridge structure and traffic volumes to find out if the noise problem is an indication of other problems affecting I-78. Increasing traffic volume data will also indicate that the noise and other associated problems will only grow worse in the future without remediation.

b. Testing of I-78 runoff

The Raritan Headwaters will not provide free detailed testing of the dark brown water runoff from I-78. It would cost \$200. They would provide a simpler test for free. The Commission authorized Deena Roberts to arrange for this free test as it might provide some clues to the toxicity level of this runoff. If this runoff from the simpler test appears to be a major pollutant, the next step would be to come up with the \$200 to find out if its effect on the South Branch, a C-1 waterway. John Madden will find out from Rich Phelan the of the outfall on the South Branch that drains from the catch basin on Leigh Street.

c. Restraining objects from flying off I-78 onto Leigh Street

Mike Humphrey said it is urgent that a barrier be installed on the overpass to protect school children and pedestrians from vehicle parts and other debris that fly off I-78. A chain link fence might not stop small objects.

d. Expanding area affected by I-78 noise

The Commission agreed the study area should add the residential section between W. Main St. and I-78. Veronique Lambert asked Carol Nemetz, Chair of the Clinton Township Environmental Commission, who was in attendance, if its Commission wanted to study how Annandale is being affected by I-78. The

inclusion of both of these historic areas would make a request to NJDOT to solve noise problems even stronger.

e. Next Steps

Tammy Healy said that there are obstacles to finding a solution to I-78 noise. She said that it is the NJDOT policy not to consider noise complaints for remedial actions from any residential development built after I-78 was open to traffic.

John Madden said Clinton Town does present a unique situation that NJDOT should recognize as an exception to this policy. Neighborhoods on Leigh Street and W. Main St. are in a State and National Historic District (as is Annandale) and Hunts Mill Park are adjacent to I-78 and are affected by its noise. What is unique about these historic districts: they are the only historic residential districts located next to the only section along I-78 where there are no sound barrier walls, or where I-78 is not situated below the level of adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Commission agreed with Madden that they were not professionally capable of proposing solutions to NJDOT and should concentrate on identifying the observable problems with I-78. Madden recommended that the Environmental Commission request the NJDOT use the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Guidance manual to decide on the appropriate techniques NJDOT should install to solve the I-78 noise, runoff and fugitive debris problems.

Mike Humphrey recommended: 1) that a public meeting with residents should be conducted by the Commission, during which the Commission can offer its understanding of the issues and the public can explain how I-78 noise, vibration, etc. are impacting their lives. 2) The Commission should prepare a report on the I-78 issues, and 3) Mike Humphrey would then take this report to the Mayor and request a date on the Town Council agenda for a public review of the I-78 issues and adoption of a resolution requesting NJDOT analysis and determination of solutions to the I-78 impact on the immediate residential neighborhoods and Hunts Mill Park.

Deena Roberts discussed ways to notify people about the proposed Commission public information meeting: Ways to notify people of meeting could include: Town Facebook page, email blast (Deena Roberts). Also, the Commission could prepare a questionnaire for distribution with questions like: Are you a pedestrian who walks under the Leigh Street Bridge? Do you have children or are you elderly and walk under the bridge?

Sustainable New Jersey recertification application

Deena Roberts and Veronique Lambert discussed the letter from Sustainable New Jersey requesting a decision by June 1 whether or not the Town of Clinton will be making another application to continue participating with Sustainable New Jersey. The Commission agreed it would make an application and set a date of May 28 to meet to prepare this application.

Adjourned 9:00pm.