

Watchung Environmental Commission

Minutes

April 28, 2014

Present: Sondra Epstein, Jean Forlano, Pam Lewis, Karen Pennett, Don Pote, Andy & Jim Stout

Absent: Rob Gibbs

Guest: Cameron Black

The meeting was called to order by Jean Forlano at 7:30 pm

Minutes

- March 24, 2014 were approved as written

Tree Matters

- Several home owners replace trees that are less than 2 ½". The Tree ordinance states minimum size tree of 2 ½" must be used as replacement for trees 18" or less. **Trees less than 2 ½" will not be accepted as replacements.**
- The Tree ordinance currently states for trees not replaced there is a \$200 fee per tree, regardless of size. Sondra recommended changing the ordinance to for the fee to be per size, \$200 for smaller trees 18" or less not replaced and \$400 for trees more than 18" not replace. Motion discussed and determined to maintain ordinance as is at \$200 per tree. The charge per size would be too stringent for the homeowner.
- **Tree Report**
 - *72 Brookdale Drive: Removed 9 pine trees, replaced 7. Only needed to replace 6.
 - *52 Knollwood Place: Request to remove 4 trees, 2 at 2 ½" and 2 at 4 ½". Instead of replacing the trees, the owner wants to fund tree bank, 4 trees at \$200 each. Environment commission is requesting he plant 4 flowering trees at 2 ½".
 - *388 Mountain Blvd: Removed 3 live and 7 dead trees. Replaced 2 at 2 ½"
 - *825 Johnston Drive: Request to remove 51 trees by builder. Developer does not want to replace any trees, will pay \$200 per tree to the tree bank. Property not inspected at this time. May have steep slope issue.
 - *21 Century Lane, Corner lot Valley Road & Century Lane request 23 be removed 2 dead, 21 live. Replace with 16 trees including 9 pines at 2 ½" 5 dogwood at 2 ½" and 2 red maples at 4". One of the trees to be removed is a large Sugar Maple. During the inspection it was noted that there was a large hole with a pipe in it by this tree. This is the pipe is the sewer cap issued by the buildings department when the house was taken down. The house on this lot was previously removed with approval from the building department. A second inspection was done, Martin Schmeide a tree expert from Schmeide Trees. One of the trees requested to be removed has been identified as a rare specimen Sugar Maple. The tree is approximately hundred years old. A tree of this size, shape and girth cannot be found within a 100 miles. This is a Landmark, a Champion tree.

After much discussion, the Environmental commission agreed not sign off on the tree permit. Arlene will notify developer, Elite Properties of our decision and concerns with the unique tree to be removed and seek a method to save the tree.

Planning Board

- No issues to report

Correspondence

- No correspondence

Miscellaneous

- **"Queen of the Sun"**

Date for showing of "Queen of the Sun" at Watchung Hills High School will be April 30.

Final plans, time lines and assignments were reviewed. Set Up begin at 6:45 pm. Must be out of school by 10 pm.

- **C. Black**

*Watchung Reservation Rubbish Roundup date has been set for May 4 and rain date May 11.

For the safety of the clean up volunteers, road will be closed or one lane closure.

*Cameron will be giving a presentation on "Watchung Water Works" on May 18th, 7-8pm at the Watchung Library. This will be a presentation about the local streams and ways to protect our drinking water supply.

Next regular meeting: Tuesday May 27 at Borough Hall. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Karen Pennett

Watchung Environmental Commission