

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

MARCH 28, 2016

Present: Karen Pennett, SONDY Epstein, Rachel Funcheon, Don Pote, Jim and Andy Stout, George Sopko

Call to Order and Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 7:30. The February 22, 2016 minutes were discussed and approved.

Tree Report:

105 Washington Rock Road, 3/3/2016, original house removed, new house to be built; remove 18 trees: replace 7 with 6 at 2 and 1/2" and 1 at 4".

206 Anderson Road, 3/9/2016, knock down, Elite Builders, new house, remove 41 trees, 15 trees larger than 18", 23 trees less than 18", replace 17 with 10 at 4" and 17 at 2 and 1/2", 6 conifer trees allowed. The builder was contacted to see if they could save one of the large oaks by moving the driveway a few feet.

38 Ellison Road, 3/17/2016; Home owner wanted to remove 3 trees in the front and 3 trees in the back yard. The owner wants to fix a drainage problem. Remove 6 trees, replace 5 at 4".

Sondy reported that the Girl Scouts want to plant a tree, and Sondy will be making a presentation about trees to their troop. The Girl Scouts will raise the funds to buy the tree. Best Lake and Spratford Park were suggested as appropriate locations for this tree, and a cherry tree was suggested as a good choice. Borough Council must approve the planting and location of the tree if planted on town property. Sondy will inform the Girl Scouts of this.

Open Space: There was nothing to report

Planning Board: Karen stated that the master plan is being updated for the pending expanse of the quarry zone. Karen expressed concern over one section of the planner's report of the tree replacement plan where it was stated that "no less than 50% of the trees shall be evergreen." After discussing our tree replacement plan of 75% deciduous and 25% evergreen/conifers, the Environmental Commission agreed that this was a unique situation for the quarry and has made some recommendations. The Commission recommends that a landscape architect be hired to create and advise the quarry on appropriate plantings with regards to the buffer. Additionally, the Commission is in agreement that they would like to see 75% of the plantings in conifers/evergreens and 25% in deciduous trees. Once the landscape architects plan is complete, the Commission would like to review the plan.

Bottle Caps: There was a nice article and illustration in the Watchung newsletter. Rachel took two bags of caps to Whole Foods in Madison, NJ. The project is going well.

Pipeline: Permits to build the pipeline have already been submitted in NY state. They have not been submitted in NJ yet, but it could be imminent. Municipal officials from 15-20 towns along the route have been meeting regularly to develop strategies to defeat the project. They are working on creating a budget to be used for legal representation for the towns should they be sued by the pipeline company. The towns will also contribute money to hire a private engineering company to do an independent environmental review of the project, so that the NJ DEP's review will not be the only information used. Also, it has been requested that the Army Corps of Engineers get involved, since the pipeline would cross many waterways in the state. Pilgrim Pipeline could request the right to eminent domain in accessing the PSE and G right-of-way.

Meetings, Correspondence, Permits: Nothing reported

Other(Old, New Business): Green Festival is April 30 at Bayberry School. Volunteers are being solicited. Rachel will have a table for bottle caps and one for pipeline information. All volunteers are welcome.

Operation Pride is Saturday, April 2 from 9:00-12:00 starting at Texier House. All volunteers are welcome.

Review of assignments for next meeting: The next meeting will be April 25, 2016

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:34PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim and Andy Stout—Recording Secretaries—Watchung Environmental Commission