

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

1. Call to Order—Roll Call:

- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
- b. Present—Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Jim and Andy Stout, Doug Speeney, Andy Baldassarre, Coraleine Kitt, Council Member Wendy Robinson

2. Approval of Minutes—August 15, 2022 Teleconference—The minutes were approved.

3. Reports:

- a. Tree Report—September 2022
 - Inspections—There were 12 inspections with 193 trees to be removed and 1 tree to be replaced. There were 3 trees replaced from a previous inspection. Karen Pennett of WEC and Karen Twisler, Sr Landscape Architect at Remington and Vernick Engineers, do joint inspections when live trees are involved. If only "dead/dying" tree applications are being reviewed, Karen Pennett goes by herself.
 - Beech Leaf Disease (BLD)—A new tree disease, first observed in Ohio, has been reported in many counties in NJ, including Somerset. The disease is being studied as to treatments. Saplings are impacted first.
 - Spotted Lantern Fly—Not too many observed in town but some seen at the Farmers' Market.
- b. Planning Board—State Legislature is proposing the converting of unused office space into mixed use properties. Land use provisions would be done at the state level rather than local. The PB does not support the present bill as written, and the Council does not want zoning rules superseded.
- c. Recycling:
 - Styrofoam—One truckload was collected on Sept. 17, 2022 with 4 volunteers from the EC plus 2 student volunteers and 2 DPW employees as recycling assistants. Jan. 21, 2023 is proposed for the next collection. Long Hill will be purchasing a Styrofoam compacter. Rachel will talk to head of L.H. DPW to see if there's a way we can share Styrofoam recycling services.
 - New Legacy Books—The Borough received its first \$40.00 check for book donations.
 - Tennis Balls—The collection "cage" for used tennis balls has been attached to the fence near the tennis courts at Mobus with the balls being collected and recycled to recycleballs.org. The recycling company strips the balls which are then used to make tennis court surfaces. Some balls are left as collected and sold to pet owners.
- d. Green Team/Farmers' Market—The Farmers' Market continues to do well. There was discussion about giving out reusable shopping bags or if people have too many already. Unneeded shopping bags can be donated at the Market for the Food Pantry where they are needed for food distribution.

4. Unfinished Business:

- a. ANJEC Report Article—The article on the EC's riparian planting project near Best Lake was featured in the latest addition of the **ANJEC Report** with excellent photos and a comprehensive description of the planting day. The DPW planted the saplings while town volunteers planted the seedlings, and it was truly a community effort. The article was in the "Acting Locally" section.
- b. Fall Newsletter Article—Rachel summarized the latest WEC projects which include Styrofoam recycling, New Legacy Books, Salem Oak planting, and Operation Pride giveaway/Best Lake planting project. Residents were reminded that permits are required before cutting down any tree in the Borough, dead or alive.
- c. Ridgewood resident—Rachel and Karen will talk with him separate from the scheduled EC meeting.

5. New Business:

- a. PB/Bd. of Adj. Applications:
 - Shop Rite (PB)—Shop Rite is to be relocated and expanded within the current Blue Star Shopping Center. This renovation also includes reconstruction of the loading dock and improvements to the sidewalk,

curbing and parking lot. A waiver was requested for an Environmental Impact Statement. The WEC recommends that the stormwater management plan be upgraded to capture more water and slow it down, so there is less runoff to the Green Brook and the problematic areas of Rt. 22. EV charging stations for all drivers, including handicapped individuals, should be located near the building for accessibility purposes. Regarding landscaping, the WEC recommends that a higher percentage of native plants be included in the plans. The use of solar panels would be economically and environmentally beneficial considering the sunny exposure of the building and the amount of electricity required for the operation of the store. Karen will raise the EC's concerns at the PB meeting.

--Starbucks (BOA)—Recommendations will be forthcoming. Ways to minimize the long waits in line should be considered because of idling.

b. NJ Tree Foundation Seminars—Must register in advance. Dates include Thursday, 9/22/2022 from 9:30-11:00 and Thursday, 9/29/2022 from 2:00-3:30. Relevant tree issues will be discussed.

c. Planting

--Shade Trees—Jim Damato suggests that homeowners plant more trees, and he would like to see tree bank funds be used for Borough plantings. Mobus Field has open space where the former playground was located. The EC suggests using native trees and consider shade trees.

--Behind 9/11 Memorial—WEC is suggesting the planting of native trees, such as Dogwood, Inkberry Holly, Red Bud, and Spice Bush, for the slope behind the 9/11 Memorial.

d. Recycling Bins at Harvest Festival—Rachel will reach out to Linda Monetti to have the recycling bins located adjacent to the trash receptacles at the Festival.

e. Other—The WEC may have a scarecrow to be displayed at the Harvest Fest.

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence: None

7. Public Comment: None

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 PM with the next meeting scheduled for October 24, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Stout (Recording Secretary) and Jim Stout (Assistant to the Secretary)

October 2022 Tree Report

Tree inspections 9

Trees to be removed 100

Trees to be replaced 6

Inspections completed by K. Pennett Watchung Environmental Commission & Karen Twisler or John. Many “dead/dying” tree inspections completed solely by K. Pennett

58 Robin Glen: 14 Trees, Dead/dying, No Replacements

Mostly large Oaks. Some of the trees had leaves, completely brown, branches snapped.

144 Stanie Glen: 12 trees dangerous/dying, 10 trees on 144 Stanie Glen, 2 trees in back on neighbor’s property, 60 Anderson Road. 60 Anderson Road property owners, Borough of Watchung, contacted. Watchung DPW or town official will review and approve to remove if necessary.

No replacements

Various trees couple of Ash. Many trees may have been strangled by vine. Vines large in diameter may have strangled trees. Recommended to remove vines. Several ashes not marked, infested with emerald ash bore recommended they also be removed.

55 Jarred Court: 7 Trees. Trees previously removed. J. Kline asked for permit to be submitted. No replacements

75 Hughes Lane: 7 Trees: 6 Ashes, 1 Maple. Permit noted 7 Ashes. Replace 1

549 Mountain: 13 trees, trees already down at time of inspection. All noted as dead/dying. Many trees were ashes. One tree had rotted stump. No replacements

110 Chelsea: 19 Ashes. No replacements

170 Knights Bridge: 4 trees, dead may be ashes, 110 Chelsea requested property owners remove trees concern trees would fall on their property. Reviewed from 110 Chelsea. No replacements

170 Johnston Drive Extension: 17 Trees new construction, within building envelope. Trees not marked. Approved, No replacements

155 Parlin Lane: 7 Trees Replace 5

Permit 6 trees, 4 Pines, 2 Ashes all dead dying. Trees marked/mapped incorrectly

Marked: 3 Sugar Gum
 2 Maples
 2 pines – dead

Mapped 2 pines –dead
 1 dead ash

Many Ash trees in back, ok to remove