

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 24, 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—September 19, 2022 Teleconference—The minutes were approved.

3. Reports:

- a. Tree Report—October 2022
 - Inspections—There were 9 tree inspections with 100 trees to be removed and 6 trees to be replaced. Inspections were completed by Karen Pennett, WEC, and Karen Twisler, Sr. Landscape Architect at Remington and Vernick Engineers. If only "dead/dying" tree applications are being reviewed, Karen Pennett goes by herself.
- b. Planning Board:
 - Bonnie Burn was approved.
 - Shop-Rite renovation was approved. A storm water management plan will be implemented in response to comments submitted by the WEC. Some aspects of this plan include retention basins, bioswales, flush mounted curbs, and overflow inlets. More retention basins were suggested for green areas.
- c. Recycling:
 - Styrofoam—Long Hill purchased a Styrofoam compactor, which melts foam down into 30 lb blocks. The compacted Styrofoam is then taken to a buyer in Middlesex. Picture frames and home insulation are several of the resulting products. At \$71,000, the compactor may pay for itself in 3 years. Rachel reached out to Al Gallo, head of the Long Hill DPW, and Watchung might be able to bring their materials free of charge to Long Hill for up to 6 times a year. The Commission discussed possibly doing more than 3 collections a year. Staffing needs to be available and committed to additional days. Other volunteer groups can be solicited for help. No decisions were made. Our next collection will be January 21, 2023. Rachel will follow up with Al Gallo.
 - New Legacy Books—An \$87.00 check was received from the book bin collection. A sign might be posted requesting that no books be left on the ground outside of the bin.
- d. Green Team/Farmers Market: The Green Team is working on a new EV charging station. The Farmers Market finishes for the year on 10/25, 2022 with a better season this year and thoughts of starting it at 3:00 PM in 2023. Reusable bags can be donated there or at the local Food Banks.

4. Unfinished Business:

- a. Bd. of Adjustment: Starbucks Application—Issues included landscaping, native plants, shade trees, organic fertilizers, storm water management, and checking the Green Building Checklist. The engineer used outdated information in the design for the storm water management plan and should follow new regulations. As a result of a WEC letter, their engineers will work with our engineers to manage storm water on site. The application was approved.
- b. Tree Planting—The Borough will do tree plantings this fall in the open areas at Mobus Field along the west branch of the Stony Brook. Doug and Rachel marked out places for 8 trees which will be a riparian buffer like at Best Lake. Doug provided a list of trees suitable to wet areas. Redbuds were suggested near the parking lot at Best Lake, and spots were marked for them.
- c. NJ Tree Foundation Seminars—Rachel reported on the second of these seminars, called "Right Tree, Right Place". Relevant topics were discussed, such as endangered species in PSEG ROW's, PSEG's priorities of safety and electrical reliability, what size trees should be planted near power lines, how PSEG trims trees near the lines, what the best trees to plant are, and basics of caring for newly planted trees.

d. Scarecrow—Doug's daughter, Emma, and friends created a scarecrow named "Terry, The Tree Hugger" which was displayed with other scarecrows on the Village Green. The WEC thanked the girls for their contribution and creativity.

5. New Business:

a. Green Building Infrastructure and Checklist—An idea was expressed to work with the Mayor and Council to have certain green infrastructure practices put into practice by ordinance. The Master Plan included having Watchung Borough adopt the SJ Green Building Checklist which did not happen. Could adopt requirement that the Checklist be given out with every larger-scale building application (residential and commercial). It was decided to wait until the new year when a sub-committee could be formed to discuss this proposal. Members discussed the pros and cons of Warren's Green Bldg Checklist vs. the SJ Checklist.

b. Other:

--According to the **Patch**, Food Banks need reusable bags and have until Nov. 4, 2022 to make a change from single-use bags to reusable bags. Paper bags could be brought back to grocery stores depending upon a decision by the Legislature.

--Best Lake—Bass population is not doing well in this stocked lake due to large population of invasive Green Sunfish. The town has a catch and release program and with the increase in Green Sunfish, the State is reluctant to continue stocking the lake. The situation and possible remedies were discussed.

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence: None

7. Public Comment: None

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 PM with the next meeting scheduled for Dec. 5, 2022 (No meeting in November).

Respectfully Submitted,
Andy Stout (Recording Secretary) and Jim Stout (Assistant to the Secretary)

November 2022 Tree Report

Tree inspections 2

Trees to be removed 29

Trees to be replaced 0

Inspections completed by K. Pennett Watchung Environmental Commission all dead tree inspections

75 Chelsea: 20 Ash trees 12" – 24", no replacements

14 Lake View Terrace: 9 Trees, already down, no replacements

8 Ash

1 Oak