

Watchung Environmental Commission – Zoom Meeting*
Monday, June 26, 2023 – 7:30 PM
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
Present: Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Andy Stout, Doug Speeney, Denise Soppas, Coraleine Kitt, Sonia Abi-Habib
2. Minutes for May 22, 2023 Teleconference approved
3. Reports
 - a. Tree Report
 - Inspections completed by Jim Damato
 - 8 properties were inspected, 8 tree removal permits were approved, 83 trees were approved for removal, and 4 trees were required to be replaced
 - b. Planning Board Meeting
 - Planner Mark Healy was assigned to look into Brook Hill property for re-development. A lot of the property is wetlands.
 - Discussed amending fence and gates ordinance
 - c. Recycling:
 - Styrofoam recycling– According to DPW, bin is emptied on average twice a week, and the Styrofoam is taken to Long Hill
 - Battery recycling grant – company called GrantMatch is a government funding strategist. Consumer electronics battery recycling program is now accepting applications. Deadline to apply for grant is August 17th.
 - d. Green Team
 - Farmer’s Market is going well
 - Working on Sustainable Jersey
 - Steam weeder – Charlie Neiss said Sustainable Jersey may not provide a grant for the steam weeder. Commission will continue to seek out funding opportunities
4. Unfinished Business
 - a. Best Lake update – A large maple tree fell. Discussed investing in 2 more bird boxes to be installed in the vicinity of the current bird box. Discussed timeline of Boy Scout project of making bird boxes for the area. Talked about installing riparian habitat sign or informational plaque. It was suggested to do in off-season. Also discussed designating a maintenance day for volunteers to weed and mulch Best Lake project area
 - b. Bat Count
 - A resident reported bat houses that were hosted by an Eagle Scout in 2015.
 - Borough will participate in bat count next year.
 - c. Preferred Tree List
 - Doug shortened and simplified the existing preferred tree list. Will be posted on the Borough website for residents.

5. New Business

- a. Board of Adjustment application —55 Jared Court. BOA met on June 8 to discuss. Many trees were removed without a permit. EC sent a letter to BOA recommending that tree replacements be required per the Tree Ordinance. Also stated that EC is concerned about granting increased impervious coverage on the property due to concerns about flooding.
- b. Spotted Lantern Fly grant – Borough received a \$10,000 grant for reimbursement of chemical. treatment for SLF. At this point the Borough has no plan to spray because the SLF has not been much of an issue. Commission discussed recommending treatment of Trees of Heaven.
- c. Fishing line recycling – Commission discussed the “Reel in and Recycle” program, where fishing line recycling bins would be installed by the lakes. There would need to be monitoring and periodic emptying of receptacles. The fishing line would be shipped to a company in Iowa. This could be a potential Eagle Scout or Girl Scout project

6. Public Comment - none

7. Adjournment: 9:50 PM

The next meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2023

July & August 2023 Tree Report

Tree inspections: 23

Tree Removal permits: 18

Approved Trees to be removed: 266 excluding 40 Jared Court & 6 Ridge

Trees required to be replaced: 31, with 4 additional at owners' choice.

D.Soppas & K. Pennett, (Jason reviewed notes on one inspection and made final approval)

6 Ridge Road (2 visits)

- New Construction – 17 live trees, 8 outside of building envelope
- Tree Replacement plan includes 9 trees.
- Tree Inspection 7/7 – no trees were marked with ribbons.
- Tree Inspection 7/12 – only 8 trees marked with ribbons.
- Can not approve until trees are marked.
- Approved by Engineering replace 17.

213 Hilcrest Rd (3 visits this month)

- New construction on empty lot.
- Previously inspected property on 5/12 -map did not match marked trees. Steep slopes involved. Asked Jason to review and advise.
- Application is for removing 26 trees.
- 7/3 – went back to the site and no change in trees markings or map document. Asked Jason to review and advice.
- 7/6 - Jason provided advice on reading the map and finding which trees were outside building envelop.
- Inspection on 7/7 –map documentation and trees marked still do not match. Application lists 26 trees, Map shows 34 trees, I count 45 marked. Some trees marked but not on the map. Dead trees marked do not appear to be on the map.
- I was provided a new map and went back to the site on 7/10. Some corrections were made on the map. Looks like Map only includes live trees, and this may explain some of the discrepancies. Trees in driveway do not appear to match the map or trees being removed. Some trees are marked with orange dots, some with orange x, some with ribbons. 45 trees are marked for removal. 14 appear outside the building envelop. Inconsistencies still exist between the application, the map, and the trees marked. I asked Jason to review and visit the site.
- *Jason reviewed my notes and approved the 45 tree removals, 14 replacements.*
- **No Tree replacement plan – this will need to be approved as well.**

165 Scott Dr

- Inspection on 7/13
- Trees listed as dead on the application – not all dead
- Trees are not marked.

- Will need to return to inspection when trees are marked.
- July 20, 2023 approved by Engineering, 10 dead trees.

61 Carrar Dr

- Inspection completed 7/13
- 8 dead ashes – *approved 8 tree removals and no replacements.*

1 Crestwood

- Inspection completed 7/7
- 6 trees: *approved no replacements.*
2 Spruce dying may be caused by lack of sunlight.
2 unknown dead very small, basically large sticks not sure if permit required.
2 Ashes
- Large Uprooted to be removed.
Owner had a lot of Bamboo: some in barrier pod so would not be invasive, other bamboo was Chunk Bamboo which are not invasive. Owner planted many oriental plants.

42 Wild Wood Terrace

- Inspection completed 7/7
- 4 trees owner of property planning to replace all trees.
2 Oak dying: one on side of stream steep slope & wetlands
2 Ashes

45 Orchard

- Inspection completed 7/28
- 35 Ashes all dead various sizes, no replacements

100 Glen Eagles permit required.

- Inspection 7/28 map submitted did not match property. Spoke to owner. Permit was supposed to be for 54 Robyn Glen. 54 Robyn Glen going to be sole told to remove dead trees.
- 16 Ashes
- Maria contacted will have to submit permit.
- New permit 11 trees 8/21/23 already down did not go on property to count.

54 Robin Glen permit says Glen Eagles

- Permit for 10 Ash trees, increased to 14 no replacements.
Found 4 additional ash trees not marked.
4 trees marked, numbers 11, 12, 13, 14 may be neighbor on 46 Robyn Glen
- Maria contacted see 100 Glen Eagle

- 8/21/23 returned to review trees already down found 8 fresh stumps several chipped areas not sure how old. Trees that were originally marked on neighbor found 2 fresh stumps some chipped age.

40 Hill Hollow

- Inspection completed 8/1
- 8 trees approved no replacements.
 - 5 Ashes
 - 3 dangerous, and/or too close to house or garage

1010 Johnston Drive

- Inspection completed 8/8
- 13 trees: 12 dead Ashes 1 dangerous possible maple approved no replacements. 1 dangerous tree may be on neighbor's property. Owner of 1010 Johnston said received permission to remove.
- Women I spoke with spoke Portuguese. Communicated using her phone by texting, translated English to Portuguese and Portuguese to English
- Dangerous tree and 2 dead ashes on steep slope. Recommended to replace.

103 Valley View

- Permit 14 changed to 13 approved no replacements.
- 13 dead many previously topped.
1 tree alive, so changed permit from 14 to 13. Owner agreed.

76 Price

- 11 trees approved no replacements.
 - 1 Oak dying/hazardous
 - 2 dead Ivy Covered, not sure type may be spruce.
 - 1 dying not sure type.
 - 7 Ashes

54 Knollwood

- 16 Ash approved no replacements.
Permit for 14 found 2 additional ashes.

40 Jared Court

- Inspection completed 8/21
- Permit 16 Trees 38 Trees marked, some very small, one large Ash not marked.
- Maria called some trees small permit not needed. Asked to resubmit map and check marked trees.

30 Nottingham

- Inspection completed 8/21
- Permit 45 Ash Trees no replacements.
- 5 of 45 on neighbor's property have permission to take down.
- Found several ashes not marked. Spoke to own on phone. They may have been on other neighbor's property or may not be taking down at this time.

45 Nottingham

- Inspection completed 8/21
- 10 trees approved no replacements.
- Found additional ashes in poor condition, told homeowner ok to remove.

6 Ridge Road

- Inspection completed 8/21
- Permit 15 found 21 trees marked replace 3.
- Previous permit submitted. Maria to check if these 21 are in addition or if some duplicated on original permit. Also informed Maria there were no structures on property, permit for reconstruction. New Permits to be submitted.