

Watchung Environmental Commission
Monday, August 21, 2023 – 7:30 PM
Minutes

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
Present: Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Doug Speeney, Coraleine Kitt, Sonia Abi-Habib
Absent: Andy Stout, Denise Soppas, Renata Reis
2. Minutes for June 26, 2023 Teleconference were approved.
3. Reports
 - a. Trees
 - Inspections / Tree Report
 - 31 trees out of 266 removed trees need to be replaced
 - 23 tree inspections in July and August
 - 18 tree removal permits submitted
 - Tree subcommittee will meet to discuss follow-up on replanting
 - b. Planning Board
 - No report. No meeting in July and August meeting was a closed session
 - c. Recycling:
 - Styrofoam – article in Echoes-Sentinel from perspective of Long Hill, who has recycled 6000 lbs so far this year
 - Fishing line program – a summary of the program will be included in the fall newsletter and includes a request for community partner to assist the EC with the program.
 - Warren clothing swap – Sustainability event started by WHRHS student to combat “fast fashion.” Discussed holding the event in Watchung
 - d. Green Team
 - Farmer’s Market attended by an average of 360 people. Numbers way up this year. Fewer vendors in the summer.
 - Began looking at Sustainable Jersey Certification for 2024
4. Unfinished Business
 - a. Best Lake update – Doug started a “River-friendly” certification application for riparian zone. Certification has multiple tiers. Comes from NJ Water Supply Authority, Raritan Headwaters, and Watershed Institute. Plantings are doing well in the area.
 - b. Boy Scout project –Doug has been working with scout, who has proposed making 6 bird boxes - 5 bluebird and 1 purple martin. Maintenance- who? Scout not responsible for maintenance. Maybe draft maintenance plan so there’s a written protocol to follow to clean up boxes. Best Lake, Watchung Lake, Philips Field proposed as possible locations. \$600 budget for materials. EC voted unanimously to fund project. Mayor and Council in favor of project.
 - c. Weed steamer – Sonia spoke with Mr. Cheeseman, head of DPW in Branchburg. Council and DPW here are interested in taking a look at it. Sonia

will set up a day to go out and speak with him and view a demonstration. Maybe make a shared service?

- d. Preferred Tree List – new list is posted on EC website.
- e. Fall Newsletter – will be published in late September. Rachel thanked the members who contributed to the article.

5. New Business

- a. Board of Adjustment application – discussed the Crown Cadillac application. Doug prepared comments that were submitted to the Board of Adjustment.
- b. River-friendly Certification- See 4.a.
- c. 50th Anniversary ceremony for '73 flood victims – Mayor put together ceremony to recognize anniversary of '73 flood when 6 area residents died. People shared their experiences on that day.
- d. Other – Camp Endeavor – clean up so far and putting gravel, smoothing it out, reseeding, walking trails. Mobus field – prepare the grounds for passive recreation, bocce court or gaga rings.

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence

- a. Certified mail – Freshwater Wetlands notices regarding Brook Hill property.
- b. DEP – project proposes razing of Brook Hill site for construction of 3 residential apartment buildings.

7. Public Comment - none

8. Adjournment: 9:35 PM

The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2023

September 2023 Tree Report

Tree Removal permits: 3 excludes 6 Ridge

Trees to be removed 43

Trees to be replaced 17

44 Valley Drive: 23 trees replace 2

- 21 Ashes
2 Oak
- Permit for 23 dead/dying trees. Oaks looked ok replace

226 High Tor: 12 trees all dead/dying

Continuation from last month's report

40 Jared: 39 trees replace 15

continuation from July/August report

- 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.
- EC reviewed site 3 times, asked for Engineer's opinion.
 - Original Permit 38 trees all marked hazardous; map inconsistencies found.
 - EC review 41 trees, included 2 Ashes not on original permit and 1 other tree replace 31
- Jim Damato reviewed and signed off: 38 trees plus one ash; replace 15. Jim did not see 2nd Ash

6 Ridge Road

- Denise reviewed July (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.
- Karen 1st 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.
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- Karen 2nd inspection
 - Spoke with gentleman on property, in charge of demolition.
 - Trees along driveway gone.
 - Told me 3 additional trees being taken down for pool & pool house, new permit being submitted. I added to current permit.
 - Informed me additional trees to be removed for sewer requested new permit be submitted.