

TRAFFIC AND BEAUTIFICATION

MINUTES

JANUARY 17, 2022

ATTENDEES

Phyllis Juetter, Chair
Mary Ann Weber
Vonnie Mott
Sondi Epstein
Gail Tafaro
Terri DeFillips
Catherine Leigh
Maureen Hemstetter
Kim DiDonato
Peter DeMartino
Christine Ead, Liaison

2022 T&B Roster

Linda Lauerman has decided to leave the committee due to time restrictions and health reasons. Matt Murphy is willing to join T&B in her place. Matt needs to notify the Boro of his interest in joining the committee.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Phyllis opened the meeting at 7:45 due to Zoom issues.

We need to set a date to take down holiday decorations. It was decided that we would do it on Wednesday, 10 a.m. Meeting behind the Texier Building.

Mary Ann mentioned that Wilson Memorial has lights that were used last year to decorate the bushes around the church are currently being stored in bins at the church. They went with artificial prelit trees this year. We were contacted to see if we had an interest in using the lights for future decorations. Most of the lights are the blanket type lights and there may be some strings of lights but at this point we don't know the number of each. The consensus was that the blanket lights would not be a good fit and we would not want to store them. If the church has strings of lights available we may be interested in those. Mary Ann will let Paul Ost know. Gail also wanted to know where the church purchased the artificial pre-lit trees and Mary Ann will try to get that information for her.

BANNERS

Phyllis reported that she has been in contact with Seth Alexander about her idea for a new banner which would be used during the non-holiday season. She will continue to work with Seth to design a new banner. Christine Ead mentioned that she has already begun to organize a program for banners to honor veterans. So far, she has a list of 40 veterans from town. They are working to set up a website to gather more information and names. The banners will most likely be black and white which would look cleaner and more visible.

BEST LAKE

There is electric at Best Lake where the evergreen tree that has died will be replaced by a River Birch. Possible ideas for upgrading/improving Best Lake area were discussed including cleaning up the area around Best Lake so people could walk there, artificial lit tree for the holidays, more trees on the east side of the lake and possibly some additional benches or sitting areas. Christine indicated that the homeowners behind the lake are not receptive to having people walk back there for privacy and security reasons. We still need a sign to identify Best Lake. There is one at Watchung Lake but none for Best Lake.

VILLAGE SQUARE

Gail brought up the suggestion of rearranging the religious items at the Village Square. She said that it does not look organized. The Nativity and the Menorah are handled by town persons not the Borough. Would need to discuss with those groups to make changes. Gail also mentioned that there are other religious sects in town that are represented so she mentioned that perhaps a decision should be made to include them or have no religious items on the Village Green at all.

The Tree of Lights is handled by the Rescue Squad. Most of the members of T&B agreed that the lights don't look very good and perhaps new lights or restringing the ones there in a different pattern would help to improve the look. Berkeley Heights and Warren were mentioned as having beautiful colored lights on their holiday tree that are very attractive.

It was also mentioned that since there are so many people sledding on the hill at the Village Square the DPW should make sure there are plenty of hay bales to protect the sledders from hitting the wall at the tree or the benches by the 9-11 monument.

There was also a discussion about

MEDIANS

Phyllis mentioned that we need new plants at the medians. Perhaps we can plant some white fountain grasses on the ends of the medians for winter. We could plant begonias around the trees and on the ends of the medians come warmer weather. The consensus was whatever plants are decided on we should keep them consistent. Phyllis also mentioned that we still need water on the first large median. Christine indicated that the Boro is planning road work in June and that may include adding water to the median and replacing sprinkler heads that were destroyed. If this happens, T&B would be involved in what to place on the median.

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL

It has been decided to keep the wreaths there all year round and just change the bows and flowers for each season.

SPRATFORD PARK

We need to replace bushes as needed by the Watchung sign. The evergreens behind the sign are dying and need to be replaced. Suggestion made to plant evergreens or other plants to cover the fence between the park and the gas station. Terry suggested that a landscape architect should be used to give suggestions on upgrading the area. The garden in front of the sign needs to be raised and much larger without blocking the lettering on the sign. It is not visible enough from the road as it is presently.

WATCHUNG LAKE

Suggestions have been made for more lighting for Stirling Road side of Watchung Lake. Currently there is not electricity there. Phyllis indicated that it would be nice to have electric there to light up the trees around the benches by the lake. Catherine indicated that the residents on Stirling Road may not go along with that idea. The Mayor has indicated that there is a plan to light the Gazebo on Mountain Boulevard and will be completed soon.

MISCELLANEOUS

Catherine brought up the issue of Hillcrest Road between the Surgicenter and Guinard Place. It is full of debris and the County cannot clean it properly because of hanging branches. It causes walkers to walk out in the street which is extremely dangerous. She mentioned that there is now a law going into effect that mandates drivers to move four feet away from walkers or bikers which goes into effect in March of this year.

Since the Watchung circle has been upgraded with new walkways, there is an issue of the crosswalks being changed and not obvious to the oncoming traffic. Suggestion was made to consider lights in the crosswalks as there are on Stirling Road.

Next meeting is February 21st Zoom meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Weber

