

## WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES(FINAL)

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

**Present:** Karen Pennett, SONDY Epstein, Rachel Funcheon, Jim and Andy Stout, Joan Tak, Lindsay Goodloe

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM, and the January 28, 2019 minutes were approved. The October 22, 2018 minutes will be reviewed at the March 25, 2019 meeting.

### **Tree Report: February 2019**

--164 Valley Drive, 2/22/19, 6 dead oak trees, open area with many tree stumps: no permit long ago. Wetland vegetation in area. No replacement.

--24 Joan Drive, 2/22/19, the trees were tagged for awhile. The Borough Engineer inquired about the trees. The homeowner came down and obtained a permit. Remove 8 trees: 7 dead or damaged, 1 live, replace 1 @ 4".

--206 Anderson Drive, 2/28/2019, new house. There was a stop work order issued, removed 26: 6 dead, 20 live: replace with 20 @ 2 and ½".

Many residents find the tree permit application to be long and difficult to fill out. We discussed ways to make the process easier and more streamline, and also possibly having one application for homeowners and one for developers. Hopefully this would increase compliance.

The article, **Why Trees Make Us Feel So Good**, will be in the spring newsletter along with information on the Watchung tree ordinance. The ordinance to increase the tree bank fee will be introduced at the March 7, 2019 Borough Council meeting with the vote at the March 21, 2019 meeting. SONDY will write up tree permit information for a separate page in the newsletter.

**Planning Board:** Short meeting—no report.

### **Old Business:**

--Bottle cap recycling—Gimme 5 program—Preserve only wants #5 caps now or caps with no number. Not sure best way to inform citizens of change. Rachel has been in communication with the regional manager and will try to set up the program at Whole Foods in Bridgewater. For now, the program will continue as is until further information is available.

--Styrofoam recycling—DPW will open a 1.7 acre fenced yard on New Providence Road in June. Rachel spoke to Bob Burns, and there is a possibility that a dumpster could be located there for styrofoam recycling. Possibly, Foam Pak could provide the dumpster. DPW could take the collected materials to Foam Pak. Rachel will check, and Lindsay will follow up with Bill Nehls. Jim suggested that the recycling could be done once a month with volunteers for better supervision of the materials being recycled.

--Trex Company—Plastic Film Recycling Program pertains to recycling plastic that stretches out. Berkeley Heights received a bench for collecting 500 pounds in 6 months, and Rachel suggested that we start the program in town with Borough Hall as the possible place of collection. Perhaps, Bayberry, Valley View, and WHRHS can be involved. Karen will check on this.

--Santucci House—Per last meet Karen checked into the Santucci house as open space. The property is owned by Brandywine Assisted Living. The house is still on the property however not being maintained.

--Poop Bag—DPW has purchased bags, and the dispensers will be put up in the spring.

--Garbage cans blowing around Phillips Field—They have been placed inside.

--Flier to be included with tax bill—**Replace Trees with Care**—The flier is done and will go out in the tax or sewer bill.

--Green Fair—May 11, 2019 at Warren Middle School from 10:00-1:00—The commission will have a table with information and a display on bottle caps and other environmental topics. Joan will have a table displaying honey and have information on beekeeping. The EC and Joan both had tables at last year's fair with lovely displays and participation by members of the commission. There will be many recycling opportunities including styrofoam (two trucks) and electronics.

--"Effective Environmental Commissions" Workshop—Karen will attend on March 2, 2019.

--The Warren Green Team participates in Sustainable Jersey and receives points for projects along with 400 other NJ towns. There was a question as to why Watchung is not participating in Sustainable Jersey. Longer members of the commission believed Watchung was once participating in the program and not sure why removed. Rachel was going to look into Watchung participating in Sustainable Jersey again.

--**Open Space and Recreation Plan**—Jim brought in a copy to provide the Environmental Commission members with the names of the members of the former Open Space Committee.

--**New Business:** The Traffic and Beautification Committee, Environmental Commission, and Historic Committee will meet on March 18, 2019 at 7:00 in Borough Hall to share commonalities and ideas and improve communication among the groups. Karen, Joan, and Jim will represent the Environmental Commission at that meeting.

The EC has an open seat and we discussed appointing a new member. Two people have applied. Karen will contact Michelle deRocco to forward applications to the Mayor.

**--Meetings, Correspondence, Permit:** No discussion

**--Review of Assignments for the Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 25, 2019.

**--Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim and Andy Stout(Recording Secretaries)