

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES(Final)

SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

Present: Karen Pennett, Rachel Funcheon, Jim and Andy Stout, Joan Tak, Council Member Goodloe

Absent: Sondy Epstein

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM, and the August 26, 2019 minutes were approved.

Tree Report: Interest was expressed in having stronger penalties for those who choose to remove trees from their property without a tree permit. It was pointed out that Chatham issued a stiff fine to a resident who flagrantly removed trees from his property.

Rachel had researched the number of live trees(close to 1,000) that had been removed from properties over a two year period as documented on the numerous tree reports. It includes those in the building envelope, but what is unknown is the number of trees taken down without the resident having obtained a permit. It is estimated that the town will lose one third of its trees as a result of the ash trees dying, so tree conservation is of the essence.

Planning Board: Low cost housing and the master plan will be discussed at the next meeting. It was mentioned that the tree replacement plan for the housing project will be at one tree per unit.

Old Business:

--Bottle Cap Recycling—going well

--Styrofoam Recycling—Rachel talked to Bob Burns, and the target date for the opening of the salt shed on the new property is November. Bob will talk to the Public Works Committee about the hours at the facility. Hopefully there will be a structure for recycling styrofoam located there.

--Trex Plastic Bag Recycling—Rachel talked to Nancy Finn, from St. Mary's Church, about the recycling program and to request permission to locate a box somewhere on the grounds. Nancy Finn will speak to Monsignor Benwell, and the box, if approved, most likely will be placed in the parish center somewhere near the entrance. This donation point will be for the parishioners only and not the general public. N. Finn will respond to Rachel in a day or so. Meanwhile, Rachel purchased 50 clear bags at Home Depot for \$16.00 to line the boxes. It was proposed that each member do a month of checking the boxes but then suggested that an individual member be responsible for one location with the duties being shared over the course of 6 months. The bags will be collected, weighed, and a total kept of poundage and followed by the bags being recycled at a Watchung Store to be decided—Target, Kohl's, or Stop and Shop. The stores prefer smaller deliveries in clear garbage bags.

The program will run from Oct. 1-April 1—6 months—with the goal being to collect 500 pounds of bags to get a free park bench for the town. Watchung Borough Hall, Cupa Café, and Wilson Memorial Church are definite sites with St. Mary's Church being a likely 4th place for recycling sites. Council Member Goodloe will send out a press release, and Rachel will list the project on Facebook and the borough website. The recycling boxes will be taken to the various places in town this week: Joan to Wilson Memorial Church, Rachel to Cupa Café, Karen to St. Mary's Church, and Council Member Goodloe to Borough Hall.

Poop Bags—The stands are up around the lake.

Recycling Bins for Town Events—The bins were set up with garbage cans next to them at the Movie Night and Music in the Park events. Karen will send a thank you note to Bob Burns and Linda Monetti and suggest that these containers be present at all future events in town.

Spring Newsletter—Joan will write an article on pollinators.

Watchung Signs—The design was approved by the group committee and is now awaiting approval for the funding by the Borough Council. \$50,000 was set aside as part of the Traffic and Beautification plans for the town in which the purchase of the new signs would be an asset in improving the town's main entrances for information and appearance sake.

Mosquito Spraying—The state is required to give a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to spraying. Joan was told by county employees that the concentration of the chemical was the lowest dose and that bees would not be harmed. Glenn a County supervisor followed up with Joan the following day about any residue on the tarps covering her hives and no residue was observed. However, other literature and resources contradict this information. Rachel handed out information on the deadly EEE mosquito virus impacting 13 NJ Counties. It was decided that a proposed letter from the Environmental Commission did not need to be written.

New Business:

--Tree Planting Around the Lake—The Commission suggests that no money be spent on planting new trees around the lake until the lake dredging project is completed.

--Grass Cutting—It was observed that grasses were being cut on the Stirling Road side of the lake, and we wondered why being as that tall grass growing along the lake is a deterrent for geese. It was mentioned that this cutting might have been done in anticipation of the Fishing Derby this weekend. The person who made this observation will be advised to contact someone in Borough Hall(perhaps Public Works) about the grass cutting.

--Joan stopped in to see Bill Hance about the Green Fair date in 2020 and made the observation that there had been no meetings of the Green Team. Joan has vendors interested in participating, but it is necessary for them to incorporate the Green Fair date in their spring schedules as soon as possible to assure their participation. The vendors are now setting up their calendars of 2020 dates for fairs and other events. Bill told her that he would get to it and get back to her the next week.

Meetings, Correspondence, Permits: None

Review of Assignments for the Next Meeting: The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM. The next meeting will be October 28, 2019

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim and Andy Stout(Recording Secretaries)