

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION TELECONFERENCE MINUTES (FINAL)

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020—7:37 PM

Present: Rachel Funcheon (Chairperson), Doug Speeney, Jim and Andy Stout, Joan Tak, Council President Wendy Robinson

Absent: Sindy Epstein, Karen Pennett

Call to Order: The teleconference was called to order at 7:37 PM.

Opening Comments: The objective of the teleconference was to discuss the budgeting of proposed projects by the Environmental Commission for the year 2020. The Borough Council needs the Commission's proposals in order to consider, and possibly incorporate, funding for our requests into the Council's budget.

Suggestions for Projects:

1. Community Garden—The Environmental Commission is exploring and endorsing a Community Garden at Camp Endeavor. Council President Robinson said this might be considered a DPW project and expenses would then come out of their budget. She will speak to Charlie Gunther, the interim supervisor of the DPW, and relay to him that the Environmental Commission would like to provide input and recommendations about the garden to DPW. It was suggested that the DPW take the first steps in setting up the area for the garden.

2. Shed—If the Borough decides to set up a Styrofoam recycling program for residents at the new DPW facility, a shed will be needed. Jim researched shed types and prices.

10' x 12' or 12' x 14'--painted wooden shed with standard roof--\$3,500.00

Tuff shed—unpainted--\$3339.00

10' x 12'—metal--\$600.00

12' x 14'—metal--\$700.00

Two workers a day to assemble the shed—approximately \$800.00

Additionally, there are companies that deal with premade sheds assembled and delivered to the site. Possibly, Home Depot would be willing to make the donation of a shed. Council President Robinson and Rachel will look into this. Craig's List is another possibility or, perhaps, a resident has a shed to donate. Thoughts for the future include the recycling of household batteries and light bulbs. Bins inside the shed would be helpful in organizing the smaller pieces of styrofoam.

3. Bluebird Houses--\$45.00 each including the post if DPW digs the hole. The houses were suggested for mounting at Phillips Field (4) and Mobus Field.

4. Wood Duck Houses--\$76.00 for the house, \$15.00 for the post, and \$40.00 for the baffle—one each for Watchung Lake and Best Lake.

5. Bat Houses—small (\$30.00-\$50.00), medium (\$50.00-\$100.00), large (\$100.00-\$200.00) which can be mounted on a post, tree, or house—Audubon has bat shelters for \$25 that can accommodate 20 bats. Bat houses could be distributed on a first come, first serve basis. It was decided that we would discuss this proposal further.

5. Wood Chip or Leaf Bin—three sided structure for the deposit of wood chips or composted leaves by DPW to be made available to residents for mulch.

6. Pollinator Garden—Towns and corporations can reach out to a company that comes and checks the soil, determines what responds the best for the specific area, and then seeds the garden (perhaps half an acre). Places considered for the garden included behind the dam between the fence and dam or at Texier House. Pollinator gardens must have adequate sun for success. Cost could be \$1000 or more. This project could contribute to Sustainable Jersey credit.

7. Hydroponic Garden—This could be available to the community, but it could be a project to be considered for another year by the Green Team so will not be included in this year's budget. A piece of property would be needed, and the area would have to be managed. It must be checked daily, and it can be expensive. It was decided that a community garden and pollinator garden would be sufficient projects for this year.

8. Educational Program—The high school auditorium or the Watchung Arts Center could be used as venues for a speaker or film or some other presentation for the community, and the Environmental Commission and Green Team could collaborate. A program might cost \$750.00 total. A speaker might charge \$350.00 for the first hour and \$100.00 after that or be willing to do it for free. There are films available to non-profit organizations.

9. Recycling Bags—We could order more reusable bags, possibly less expensive, smaller cloth bags, to give out to residents to help them prepare for a potential plastic bag ban. Cost would be approximately \$500.00.

10. Green Fair—Valley View School has a fashion show with clothing made of all recycled products. Perhaps, the students could participate at the Green Fair which would then encourage other students to attend.

11. Deer Whistles for Cars--\$5.00-\$10.00 for a set of two—could be available at the Green Fair or at Borough Hall. At the Green Fair, the whistles could be raffled by playing some type of game such as spinning a wheel.

Review of Assignments for the Next Meeting: The teleconference was adjourned at 9:14 PM with the next regular meeting scheduled for March 23, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Stout (Recording Secretary) and Jim Stout (Assistant to the Recording Secretary)