

# WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES (FINAL)

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2021

## **1. Call to Order—Roll Call:**

- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
- b. Present—Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Jim and Andy Stout, Joan Tak, Doug Speeney, Council President Wendy Robinson
- c. Absent—Andy Baldassarre

**2. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the Zoom meeting of 6/30/2021 were approved.

## **3. Reports:**

- a. Tree Report:  
The new Borough Engineer, Jim, will go on inspections with Karen now instead of Shari.  
--General Report—82 trees have approval to be removed with 4 trees to be replaced (not final)  
--EC Site Inspections; Violations: 5 property permits signed off and 2 properties need further review
- b. Planning Board:  
--Affordable Housing application on Bonnie Burn Road continues, and the applicant has completed their presentation and rested their case. Weldon is the major objector to approval.  
--Learning Experience—application approved.
- c. Recycling:  
--Plastic Bags—Acme in New Providence is still not doing plastic bag recycling, but the Shop-Rite does recycle plastic bags.  
--New Legacy Books—works with non-profits and townships throughout NJ, profit is 15% of sales of books with \$40.00 each month even if no books are recycled. Firemen's Exempt Hall parking lot is the suggested placement of the bin with proceeds going to Friends of the Library. Planning Board may have to approve. Sustainable Jersey points can be earned.
- d. Green Team:  
--Green Fair—Watchung-Warren Green Fair, Sept. 25, 2021, 10:00-1:00, at the Warren Township Municipal Complex. Still not 100% sure if it will be regular in-person fair or drop-off only. Available recycling includes shredding, electronics, white Styrofoam, gently used books with bar codes, eyeglasses (Warren Lions Club), and over the counter medicines (not liquids). The Morris-Somerset Beekeepers' Association and CERT will be present. CDC safety guidelines will be followed. EC will have a table and distribute EC bags, handouts, and possibly milkweed seeds and wildflower seed packets. Doug, Charlie Neiss, Joan, and Council President Wendy Robinson will help.  
--Sustainable Jersey—trying to finalize submission by Sept. 10, 2021 for Bronze. Silver is in doubt for 2021.  
--Farmers' Market—vendors and attendance patterns have been issues with hope for attendance pickup in September. More vendors will participate.

## **4. Unfinished Business:**

- a. Trex Bench Plaque—Plaque is completed and ready to be affixed to bench.
- b. Fall Community Educational Programs:  
--Harvest Fest—Oct. 23, 2021 is the planned date. Morris-Somerset Beekeepers' Association will be present with possibly 2 observation houses and handouts. Joan will try and secure the NJ State Honey Queen and Princess. EC will have a table with educational handouts for residents and possibly milkweed seeds.  
--Movie Night—very expensive for equipment rental—over \$1,000—will revisit suggestion in spring.
- c. Plastics Ban—May 4, 2022 is effective date for plastics and paper bag ban which is most progressive in country. EC should start publicizing ban and can do so through newsletter, social media, Watchung Borough website, **Echoes-Sentinel**, and the new Chamber of Commerce. Bag Up NJ has a short video which can be

used. ANJEC has information available on the bag ban which can be used as templates for the publicity campaign.

d. Free Cycling at Curb—2 proposals—twice a year at curb in front of house or on the Friday and weekend before annual bulk pickup with items to be removed from curb before bulk pickup begins on Monday. Town wide free cycle was also suggested with a \$20.00 fee to participate. EC prefers curbside before bulk pickup. Doug will write up proposal, and Council President Robinson will present to the Council for consideration.

e. Newsletter Articles—Submitted were articles on the Spotted Lantern Fly and the Plastics and Paper Bag Ban.

## **5. New Business:**

a. Salem Oak Seedling—41 municipalities received seedlings in 2021. Watchung needs to fill out the application to the NJ Forest Service and hopefully we will get a seedling next spring.

b. Volunteer Training—cannot have quorum over the phone or via email. EC comes under an advisory committee. Could still use some clarification from Borough Attorney

c. Plastic Film Curbside Recycling—SC Johnson sponsors it. Bin is supplied, and pickup would be once a month. Representative of company is available to speak to EC and BC to explain the pilot program. EC will invite company representative to future meeting to discuss program, and could invite town officials to attend presentation.

d. Other:

--Almost out of reusable EC bags from first order of 175—EC favors reordering bags of same quality, possibly in two sizes (original size and smaller variety). Rachel will research proposal of ordering two different sized bags.

--Doug asked if there was any town flooding from previous storm, and there was no flooding reported.

**6. Special Announcements, Correspondence:** Rachel will not be at the Sept. 27, 2021 meeting, and Karen will preside over that EC meeting.

**7. Public Comment:** None

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 PM with the next meeting scheduled for September 27, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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## July August 2021 Tree Report

**82 trees to be removed**

Ash, Black Birch, Oak, Pine/Spruce, Maple, Sequoia, Not identified

**4 trees to be replaced (not final)**

**5 properties permit signed off**

**2 properties need further review**

40 High Tor: 22 Trees; replace 2

Several Ash, Maple, few birch, plum and unknown, most dead dying. Found additional dead birch, new marked healthy birch may be mismatch. Owner to check

45 Snoden request 25 did not sign off

Pool to be put in. Trees not marked. Seems like 30 trees need to be removed.

50 Glen Eagles 18 Trees

10 Trees too close to house

4 May be one, one trunk divides to 4

3 Dead

1 leaning/dying

13 Glen View: 13 trees; replace ?

10 Trees along driveway, healthy do not look nice

1 Ash

1 Sequoia too close to house

1 pine/spruce close to neighbor's property. Neighbor to put fence up

175 Sunlit Drive 21 Trees replace 2

Mostly ash, permit originally for 17 added 4 dead trees (3 ash 1 cherry)

90 Stanie Glen request 7 did not sign off

Pool to be put in, seems like more need to come down. Engineer needs to review site plan.

25 Sunbright 8 Trees all ash dead/dying

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