

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 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. Guest Speaker: Mike Beson, Consultant for SC Johnson—Curbside Plastic Film Recycling:

- a. Mike Beson—Guide Strategies—introduced a new "opt-in" program sponsored by SC Johnson—curbside collection of plastic bags and film once a month in plastic buckets supplied by company. Public Works, or county recycling, could pick up and place in dumpster to be picked up and delivered to a recycling center, which then makes plastic pellets for reuse.
- b. SC Johnson helps with marketing. Mike is a facilitator and will speak to the Somerset County Recycling Coordinator and help determine how this program might work in Watchung.
- c. Grants available from SC Johnson to pay for DPW worker's time or purchasing electric vehicle. Sustainable Jersey points can be earned. Mike will discuss with SC Johnson about financial support.

* Rachel thanked Doug and Karen for help last month. Joan thanked members for cards, flowers, messages.

3. Approval of Minutes:--9/27/2021 Zoom Meeting: The minutes were approved.

4. Reports:

- a. Tree Report: October 2021
 - General Report—64 trees to be removed, 3 trees to be replaced.
 - EC Inspections: 11 properties were inspected.
 - Consider 10% slope on hills when approving permits, importance of proper tree marking, free tape offered when obtaining permit, and training for EC tree inspectors. Ordinance needs to be more protective of trees.
 - Proposal for simpler tree permit for dead, dying, or diseased trees considered. Engineer would still go out, and owner would need a licensed tree company. Then there would be three permit options—land disturbance, no land disturbance, and dead, dying, diseased as categories.
- b. Planning Board:
 - Lot line adjustment on Rock Ave. went through.
 - Resolution for Bonnie Burn project read but no vote taken. Bill Butler objected citing notice not given soon enough. Karen objected to applicant's request to allow trees to be removed prior to final approval. The application was changed to "the applicant shall not be allowed to conduct tree clearing in the conservation easement or in the area of the sewer run before obtaining required approvals.
- c. Recycling—New Legacy Books; Styrofoam; Bottle Caps
 - New Legacy Books—BC given information on New Legacy Books—Borough will earn \$40.00-\$150.00 per month, depending on sales of collected books. Money will be donated to Watchung Library Advisory Board—resolution at Nov. 4 BC meeting for approval and then company can bring bin, to be located behind Firemen's Exempt Hall.
 - Styrofoam—Mayor wants specific proposal and could get started in January. 3 times a year (January with a snow date, Green Fair, and Sept. and could use DPW site with EC doing collection along with volunteers and DPW taking Styrofoam to Foam Pack. EC could pay for driver. Proposal to be prepared for BC Nov. 22, 2021 meeting.
 - Bottle Caps—Rachel continues to explore facility possibilities to accept bottle caps such as a regrind shop.
- d. Green Team—Green Fair Report, SJ, Farmers Market
 - Green Fair—very successful, much recycling collected. 570 cars came through in 3 hours.

--SJ—Bronze Level Certification achieved for 200 points—actions will be recognized in Atlantic City—working on silver certification.

--Farmers Market—done for year, vendors excited for 2022 season (June 7, 2022- Oct. 2022).

5. Unfinished Business:

a. Harvest Festival—did not participate due to lack of time for organizing, will participate in May at the Community Picnic and distribute milkweed seeds, seed packets, bags, etc., and have beekeeper's presentation.

b. Free-Cycling at Curb

--Doug formulated proposal for weekend free recycling of unwanted items before community bulky pickup. Would remove free offerings before annual collection commences on Monday.

--Will wait until next year to submit proposal to BC for consideration.

c. Reusable Bags—Two bag types available but quality not as acceptable as former bags nor is color. Smaller size ruled out. Will be distributed at Green Fair in April, and Sustainable Jersey points to be earned.

d. EC 2022 Budget—expenses proposed include training class for tree inspectors, curbside recycling, Styrofoam collection, reusable bags, saplings and protective fencing, and dues.

e. Salem Oak Application—submitted for EC placement on list for 2022 to receive sapling.

6. New Business:

a. Ida/Climate Response—EC needs to deal with climate change going forward and discussed suggestions (See attachment).

--Master Plan adopted for 10 years—Planning Board can take earlier look and use tool that gives framework from NJDEP plus have a municipal checklist through ordinance.

--Increase infrastructure—rain gardens

--Reduce amount of impervious cover and have offset elsewhere—could use Rutgers Impervious Action Plan of 2015 as guide.

--Increase native tree and shrub plantings along waterways and obtain grants such as from ANJEC or water company.

--Tree Bank Funds—use for more aggressive plantings such as replacement behind library. Money available to be requested from Bill Hance.

--Green Building Checklist—get it passed as an ordinance and required to be completed before submitting application to Planning Board.

--Updates on Flood Control Projects.

--PARSA—regional sewage authority—take advantage of their services.

--Municipal Collection Systems—Someone is licensed. Are we getting feedback?

Preferences to explore include Master Plan, Tree Banks Funds, and the Green Building Checklist. Karen will bring Master Plan and Tree Bank Funds to Planning Board.

b. Tree Replacement Recommendations—List of native trees on EC webpage to be helpful if replacing ash and other dead trees.

c. SLF Larvae Scrapers—Got 100 credit-card-sized scrapers from Rutgers Co-op. Directions on scraper—best time to use is in fall on egg masses—check trees.

d. Tree Removal Permit Application—dead, dying, diseased—discussed under Tree Report.

7. Special Announcements, Correspondence: none

8. Public Comment: none

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 PM with the next meeting scheduled for Dec. 6, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

October 2021 Tree Report

64 trees to be removed

3 trees to be replaced

4 properties

50 Nottingham: 18 Trees to be remove no replacements

7 Ash

2 Maple

3 Locust

3 Blue Spruce

2 Pines

1 Unknown

61 Carrar: 11 to be removed 3 replacements

First visit Trees marked with red paint, some marked incorrectly some not marked. Marks difficult to find. Requested trees to be marked with colored tape. Tape to be put around each tree to be removed. 8 trees marked with tape, 7 Ash 1 Maple poor condition

Second visit 11 trees marked with tape (2 of the 11 split, 1 of split could be considered 7 trees the other 2 trees) split trees each counted as one as marked. Trees mostly Ash, others poor condition.

5 trees still had original red paint marking, no tape not to be removed. 2 of 5 split.

Replace 3 trees for trees removed without permit.

Trees reviewed were in front and sides of house. No trees in back reviewed. Many of the trees in back were ashes in poor condition.

81 Carrar: 10 trees permit originally 9 no replacements

7 Ash

2 Oak

1 unknown

45 Glen Eagles: 25 Trees to be removed, no replacements

22 Ash

3 Evergreen