

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021

1. Call to Order—Roll Call:

- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM.
- b. Present—Rachel Funcheon, Jim and Andy Stout, Doug Speeney, Council President Wendy Robinson
- c. Absent—Karen Pennett, Joan Tak, Andy Baldassarre

2. Approval of Minutes—10/25/ 2021 Zoom Meeting: The minutes were approved.

3. Reports:

a. Tree Report:

--General Report—152 trees to be removed, 24 to be replaced, 13 properties inspected by EC.

Marking of trees needs to be done properly. Suggestion made to put reminder at top of permit, and tape to be freely provided by the Borough. Also discussed again asking residents who are removing dead trees if they plan to replace.

--Recent Issues--Behind the Library, many trees were removed. Concerns were expressed about the stream bank being unstable and in need of proper restoration. On Stanie Glen, trees were removed from an upslope property resulting in property below receiving excessive runoff. Complaint filed with the Borough. Storm Water and Erosion Control Ordinance (Chapter 23-A) addresses this issue. More trees removed on Lakeview Ave. That street losing large number of mature trees. A question was raised about the system in place for monitoring replantings (how, when, who)? Number of trees to be replaced and an address in October Tree Report need correction and to be sent again.

--Rutgers Course—Hazardous Tree Identification—Karen attended online and found it very informative.

b. Planning Board: No report.

c. Recycling:

--New Legacy Books—Bin will be located at top of driveway between Firemen's Exempt and Firehouse and will be above yellow outline and on a bed of gravel. Waiting for final approval of the location and then bin can be installed.

--Styrofoam—Resolution establishing the program was passed by Council for Jan. and Sept. collections. Styrofoam Recycling Policy and an Information Sheet were issued. First collection will be on 1/22/2022 at the DPW garage on Somerset St. and will be for Watchung residents only. Resident will exit vehicle and bring clean and white Styrofoam (no peanuts) to recycling area for inspection by DPW employee and EC members. Non-acceptable materials will be taken home by resident. Helpers will have vests and badges, and information signs will be present. Advertising for the event will be in the **Echoes-Sentinel** and on Facebook.

--Bottle Caps—program still paused—Other possibilities include Plastic Services in Middlesex, but they require separation of caps by numbers. Waste Management Recycle America is another source. Representative suggested a "grind shop" and will research that.

--Curbside Plastic Bags—SC Johnson wants a county wide approach. SC Consultant will contact Somerset County representatives with suggestions for this.

d. Green Team—Council President Robinson's Report from Convention in AC—Sustainable Jersey Bronze Level achieved. 90% of NJ population live in communities that strive for Sustainable Jersey certification. USDA has Tree Owner's Manual available to residents. EC has a lot of authority/responsibilities about open space. EC, Recreation Commission, and the Green Team should work together and discuss Ness, Camp Endeavor, west end of Watchung Lake. Grants available with SJ certification.

4. Unfinished Business:

a. Reusable Bags—Rachel has been in contact with company which supplied bags to EC originally. The company has recycled bags in blue and green and can put WEC logo on bag. Council President Robinson has information on "Totes" of comparable prices and will share information with Rachel.

5. New Business:

a. Seedling Order—NJ Forestry Service Nursery 2022 Catalog available on Dec. 7, 2021 with seedlings priced between .76 and .80 cents apiece. Suggestions were made for species of trees/shrubs to be ordered. Round Valley is closest pickup location. Ordering early allows for best selections.

b. Riparian Tree Planting east of Best Lake—Doug in contact with Nature Conservancy regarding riparian plantings. Can use saplings and supplement with trees and shrubs. Financial resources can include Tree Bank funds or possible grant from ANJEC. Nature Conservancy will provide protection up to 200 and technical assistance.

c. Resident Involvement with Girl Scouts—Resident working on Master's Degree wants to do local environmental project involving Girl Scouts, such as a video. Suggestions included Scouts helping with seedling distribution, drawing on seedling bags, anti-idling campaign with parents, plastic bag ban, assist with Styrofoam collection, or making drawings behind charging station.

d. Other—Advertise bag ban, curbside free recycling, seedling giveaway and fencing, planting more trees, climate responses, prepare for community picnic, Green Building Checklist, new recycling program, clothing bin to repurpose clothing, revisit proposed bamboo ordinance, amendments to tree ordinance (EC planting trees with Tree Bank funds, along with T and B).

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence: None

7. Public Comment: None

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 PM with the next meeting scheduled for January 24, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

December 2021 & January 2022 Tree Report

Tree inspections

trees to be removed 151, 82 of which are Ashes

trees to be replaced 40; 35 required

properties 7

Planning Board: 12 to be removed, replacing 42 along with planting shrubs

All tentative pending changes

December

30 Nottingham Drive; 31 Trees original permit 26, added 5 dead trees All 31 dead

26 Ash, original permit 24

2 Maple, original permit 1

1 Locust

2 Atlantis, original permit 0

No Replacements

50 Nottingham Drive: 21 Ash Trees

No Replacements

42 Skyline Drive: 10 Trees all live

1 Tulip

9 Oak

5 trees being taken down due to addition

Replace 5, owner replacing all 10

53 Wildwood Terrace: 24 Trees 14 for building addition 10 other

14 not on permit being removed for building addition

6 Holly view/clearing and grading

4 Spruce view/clearing and grading

Replace 10

January 2022 Tree Report

46 Orchard: 44+ trees original permit 38+

35+ Ash counted 35 may be more

8 Pine original permit 3

1 Wild cherry not on original permit

Pine being removed for pool, cherry being removed due to concern of home owner

Replace 9: 8 @ 2.5" 1@4"

77 Sunbright: 11 trees

10 Tulip, very tall

1 dead unknown variety

Replace 10

164 Valley Drive: 10 Trees

10 trees various sizes mostly small. Creating second driveway to go out to Fox Chase.

Back up driveway in case main driveway blocked and need to get sand and various supplies to riding paddock.

As leaving noticed many trees marked with red tape. When speaking with home owners, they mentioned many trees in front to be trimmed. Home owners have previously been block from fallen branches. Family member disabled.

No replacements

744 Mountain Blvd. - Remodeling of Office Building: Planning Board

Engineering Plan

12 trees to be removed

3 Trees in building box , Norway Spruce 18"

2 Dead/Dying, Norway Spruce 14" and 16"

2 Trees in Parking lot expansion - 48" Maple and 18" Ash

3 No longer effective for screening - 16" and 18" Norway Spruce, 18" Blue Spruce

2 Dangerous - 30" and 36" Norway Spruce

7 replacements required

Going to try and save 2 of Norway Spruces, possibly more

Replanting

3 Red Maples

3 Sugar Maples

23 Leyland Cypress

10 River Birch

3 Dogwood

11 Mountain Laurel

14 Winter Gem Box

12 Knockout Rose

Subject to change working with neighbor for screening

Pete Martino thought most of trees were diseased

For trees that are to remain, if not healthy in 5 years to be replaced.