

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES (FINAL)

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021

1. Call to Order—Roll Call:

- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.
- b. Present—Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Jim and Andy Stout, Joan Tak, Doug Speeney, Andy Baldassarre, Council President Wendy Robinson

2. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Zoom meeting of 2/22/2021 were approved.

3. Reports:

- a. March 2021 Tree Report
 - General Report--36 trees to be removed with no replacements, 7 applications for 16 trees inspected by town official (tree report attached)
 - Site Inspections, Violations—1 application for 20 trees inspected by EC
- b. Planning Board
 - Learning Experience has engineer who has countered Weldon testimony, tree replacement plan presented with a variety of deciduous trees, conifers, shrubs, and perennials, EC can recommend the planting of native species and suggest alternatives to deer-friendly plants; DEP does final approval on wetlands.
 - Karen will seek clarification on process for getting applicant to fill out the Green Building checklist.
- c. Recycling—Styrofoam
 - Rachel spoke to Foam Pack about issues discussed at last EC meeting. Unacceptable materials are put back in the truck; recycling is free for towns.
 - Watchung would get money back from the state annual Tonnage Grant.
 - Proposal for town project—Modeled on Scotch Plains program. Use large plastic bag (no bin or shed) for collection, 4 hours one day a month at DPW yard, DPW employee to monitor collection, Watchung ID required.
 - Concerns—traffic congestion and safety in DPW yard due to equipment and work vehicles. Need input from DPW.
 - Alternative Suggestions—Texier House and Police Dept. parking lot. Logistics to be worked out.
 - Rachel will send list of questions and concerns to DPW committee for discussion at their next meeting.
- d. Green Team—Green Fair
 - Date set for 9/25/2021. Drive-through or actual event to be decided; vendors solicited by Susan Zeitels of Warren.
 - Locations--Warren Municipal Complex or Watchung Hills Regional High School. Possible expired drug collection coordination that day between Watchung and Warren.

4. Unfinished Business:

- a. Trex Bench
 - Location at Mobus Field was selected, on path near little free library and close to main sidewalk.
 - Rachel will prepare formal request that DPW pick up bench, assemble, pour concrete, and install bench.
- b. Operation Pride—Seedling Giveaway
 - Date is Sat., 5/1/2021 at Texier House from 10:00-12:00, for Traffic and Beautification and EC members, and at Mobus Field from 12:00-2:00 for Recreation Commission doing crafts.
 - Seedling giveaway: Total of 300 seedlings bundled into 60 units of 5 each by EC members. Volunteers for Operation Pride should get trees first. Some will be given to Recreation for distribution at Mobus.
- c. Spring Newsletter Articles
 - Bamboo: Doug prefers that his article contain only suggestions for native plants as screening alternatives to bamboo and encouraged members to view native plant data base for additional suggestions.
 - Spotted Lantern Fly: Rachel will make edits in her article before submission. Sticky tape is discouraged.

d. Tree Planting with T & B

--Researching which trees are best for the east side of Best Lake. T & B will discuss at their next meeting.

5. New Business:

a. Food and Water Watch proposed a resolution against Gibbstown Logistics Terminal and LNG (liquefied natural gas) shipments.

--Project has many safety concerns; would exacerbate climate change; continues fossil fuel dependency.

--The EC voted on the following: "Does the Watchung Environmental Commission support the Borough Council passing a resolution against the Gibbstown Logistics Terminal project?" It passed with 5 yes, 1 no, and 1 abstention.

b. ANJEC Grant Application

--Open space stewardship program: \$1,500.00 grant, application due 4/19/2021. Many requirements, need specific project to apply for funding. Members felt there is not enough time to put this together for this year.

--Suggestion—Apply in 2022 using as project one of proposals for the Environmental Center.

c. Camp Endeavor Environmental Center—Council Member Martino submitted a proposal to the Borough for a comprehensive environmental center at Camp Endeavor.

d. Book Recycling

--New Legacy Books offers bin for book collection and picks up books for resale or recycling.

--Revenue stream for designated service organization (non-profit) in town such as First Aid or PBA

--Weigh books for tonnage, which would also increase Watchung's annual Tonnage Grant from the state.

--Placement suggestions—Texier House or behind Fireman's Exempt—place with an overhang suggested.

e. Rutgers Co-Op Webinar

--Rutgers Co-op has a public outreach coordinator who can do a webinar—30 minutes on a pollinator garden and 30 minutes on SLF and Emerald Ash Borer as possibilities.

--Time frame: as soon as April; Warren can be invited to participate.

f. ANJEC Webinar—"Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissioners". Rachel attended and reported.

g. Other—Joan, through her involvement in mentoring a Girl Scout in Berkeley Heights on beekeeping, reported on observing specialized subcommittees functioning well as part of their EC.

6. Public Comment: none

7. Special Announcements, Correspondence: none

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 PM with the next meeting scheduled for April 26, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

March 2021 Tree Report

36 trees to be removed, no replacement

1 application for 20 trees inspected by EC

7 applications for 16 trees inspected by town official

825 Johnston, trees/stumps not well marked or mapped (marked with small round marker)

20 Items to be removed: Stumps, fallen trees, dead/diseased.

*4 Stumps trees already cut

*3 stumps several feet high, trees without branches

*2 fallen trees some snapped several feet up

*6 Ash trees dead/dying could hit house

*Miscellaneous trees

1081 Johnson Drive: 8 Trees 2 within 15 feet of house, Trees not marked will return for inspection

Tree removals not inspected by EC

#Trees	Location	reason	Notes
January			
2	264 Stirling Road	dead/dying	Cottonwood, Maple
3	103 Valley Drive	dead/dying	2 Ash, 1 Oak
2	200 Valley Drive	dead	2 Oak, 30" and 32:
1	9 Deer Run	dead	Oak 32"
1	11 Lakeview	close to structure	Locust 24"
<u>1</u>	95 Valley View Road	close to house	Ash
10			
February			
5	488 Watchung Ave		4 Ash, 1 Locust
March			
1	92 Spencer Lane	dead	
2	104 Valleyview Road	dead	Red Bud, Chestnut
3	474 Ridge Road	Hazardous	Tulip: 15", 17", 22"
1	73 Lakeview	Hazardous	Hollow tree
4	120 High Oaks	may be close to structure	1 Birch, 1 Japanese Maple, 2 Magnola
2	Lakeview	close to house	Crab Apple, Blue Spruce
<u>3</u>	35 Cedar	dead/no branches	Elm 10", 2 unknown no branches 14" & 20"
			Plan on replanting after construction
16			