

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES (FINAL)

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 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 3/22/2021 were approved.

3. Reports:

- a. April 2021 Tree Report
 - General Report—99 trees to be removed, 23 trees at 6 sites to be replaced, excludes 30 replacements at 843 Johnston Drive
 - EC site inspections; Violations—20 applications inspected by EC includes those under 5 trees, 2 inspections for trees removed without permits
 - Ash Trees—Concerns were expressed over the loss of many ash trees in town. Proposals for planting additional trees of other varieties included the state possibly having a replanting program or the town having a seedling giveaway. The EC will continue to discuss ways to mitigate the loss of ash trees. The Commission discussed and decided not to recommend changing the ordinance to require replanting for ashes removed.
- b. Planning Board
 - Learning Experience is still being discussed. It was recommended that the video of the PB meeting be viewed, as details are complicated.
 - Bonnie Burn proposal will continue with a special upcoming meeting. The owner is the new applicant and will be the developer. Sterling Properties gave a presentation.
- c. Recycling
 - Styrofoam—Rachel spoke with administrator Jim Damato. He recommended that the EC vote on the issue, and if the decision was made to move forward, send a recommendation to the Council for approval, leaving it up to them to work out details of implementation of the program. Two votes were taken. "Do you support the EC recommendation to the Borough Council for the establishment of a Styrofoam Recycling Program for Watchung?" It passed unanimously. "Do you support using money from the EC budget to support the program?" It passed unanimously. The EC will send an official recommendation to the M and C asking them to decide on the location, frequency, and method of collection of the Styrofoam. Foampack in Springfield is no longer accepting Styrofoam from homeowners, only from commercial entities and municipalities.
 - New Legacy Books—Possible locations were discussed again, as were benefactors of the money earned for recycling the books. Rachel will reach out to Hannah at the library to make sure they don't collect used books for the library's benefit.
- d. Green Team—Green Fair--Watchung will coordinate with Warren. The present plan's location is at the Warren Municipal Complex's parking area and will be a drive through format which could change to an in person format by the Sept. 25, 2021 date. Susan Zeitels is getting vendors with Joan providing her a list of 10-12. Charlie Neiss, Green Team chairperson, is working on Sustainable Jersey points.

4. Unfinished Business

- a. Trex Bench—It was installed at Mobus Field near the beginning of the path. The EC will look into having a plaque made for the bench to acknowledge the contributions of the residents who helped by donating over 500 pounds of plastic bags in a 6 month period.
- b. Operation Pride—Seedling Giveaway--The seedlings will be picked up by DPW and brought to Rachel's house on Wed. Karen, Doug, and Rachel will tag and bundle them to be organized into 60 bundles of 5 each for distribution this Saturday during Operation Pride at Texier House from 10:00-12:00 by EC members. At noon, remaining seedlings will be relocated to Mobus Field for distribution.

- c. Spring Newsletter Articles—Articles on Bamboo and the Spotted Lantern Fly will be included.
- d. Tree Planting with T & B—EC will meet with T & B and DPW to decide the placement of selected trees on the east side of Best Lake. Suggestions for trees included Silver Maple, Swamp Maple, and Red Oaks as well as Sweet Gum, Red Birch, and Silver Maple.
- e. Rutgers Webinar—Watchung and Warren participated with 30 residents joining the presentation by Rutgers Cooperative Extension. The practical information included Pollinator Gardens, Emerald Ash Borer, and Spotted Lantern Fly. The event was recorded and the EC will post a copy when it becomes available.
- f. Bamboo Ordinance—Laws and Ordinances is working on it, and the proposed ordinance is in the drafting stage with no recommendation having been made yet to the Borough Council.

5. New Business

- a. Green Building Checklist in Master Plan—The EC unanimously voted to recommend to the Mayor and Council that they formally adopt the Sustainable Jersey Green Building Checklist as set forth in the recently revised Master Plan. This means that, if adopted, all applicants coming before the Planning Board would be required to complete the Checklist, but compliance with it would not be mandatory.
- b. Ridewise Meet and Greet—3 members of the EC and local officials attended and participated. The advocacy group promotes the use of electric vehicles and the installation of charging centers. A recommendation was made for the Master Plan to require new construction to include charging stations in their plan. Suggestions for charging stations included the Rt. 22 corridor in addition to police stations and municipal buildings.
- c. Resident Concerns; Leaf Blowers, Roundup
 - Leaf Blowers—Rachel read the letter she received from a resident complaining about gas-powered leaf blower noise and pollution. Residents can attend the BC meeting and express their concerns about these machines. There was discussion of regulating their use, and pros and cons of electric vs. gas-powered blowers. The Commission decided not to move forward with regulation of gas-powered blowers at this time.
 - Roundup—Rachel received an email from a resident asking if Roundup is banned on school grounds and Borough property. Andy B. will look into this. There was a discussion of regulating the use of the chemical Glyphosate in the Borough. A license is required for using pesticides. The license number to spray must be on the side of the landscaping trucks. Infractions can be reported to the DEP at 877-WARNDEP.
- d. Resident letter re: Canna Lilies—This request by a resident to plant on public land in town will go to T & B and the Garden Club for consideration.
- e. Other
 - NJ's Clean Energy Program offers free pickup of your working refrigerator/freezer and provides a \$50 incentive.
 - Gibbstown Natural Gas Logistics Terminal Resolution—Council President Robinson will follow up about the BC acting on this.

6. Public Comment: None

7. Special Announcements, Correspondence: Masur Consulting sent a letter of notification of an application sent to NJDEP for Freshwater Wetlands Permit regarding a retaining wall repair.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 PM with the next meeting scheduled for May 24, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

April 2021 Tree Report

99 trees to be removed

23 trees at 6 sites to be replaced, excludes 30 replacements at 843 Johnston

20 applications inspected by EC includes those under 5 trees

2 inspections for trees removed without permits

610 Johnston: 7 trees 4 Oaks, 2 Ashes, 1 unknown

180 Bayberry: 1 Ash, diseased @26"

35 Dogwood: 1 Ash @12" permit lists Oak

90 Lakeview: 4 trees 2 on application 1 Oak @16" 1 Ash @14", 2 recommended by tree expert Maples 27"

20 Lakeview: 3 trees 2 Hickories @ 7 & 15", 1 Mulberry @ 18" application states 4 trees 1 rotted log

148 Stanie Bray: 4 Evergreens replace 3

330 Stirling: 7 trees 6 Hemlocks, 1 Oak all dead/dying. Hemlocks close to street.

137 Cedar: review for recommendations on what to replant to replace many large ashes. Request for permit will follow

55 Glen Eagles: 9 trees 7 Ashes (3@18"1@24",1@12",1@8",1@26")and 2 Pines dead @12"

40 Glen Eagles: replacement inspection, replaced 7 trees

10 Snoden: 4 trees 3 Ash (2@16" 1@18"), 1 Oak@12" not marked

180 Washington: 3 Oaks 1 close to house 2 close to pool house

90 Chelsea: 10 trees 3 Birch @ 16, 7 Pines @ 3" diseased, dying too close to house replacing 10

60 High Tor: 1 Oak too close to house

91 High Tor: 4 trees 2 Oak @24", 2 Maple@ 12" and 18" (permit states 3, 1 oak added hazardous) replace 1

10 Crestwood: 4 trees 2 Oak @15" 2 Ash @16"

430 Phillips: 5 trees 4 Oak (3@22",1@44") hazardous, 1 Poplar replace 1 @ 2.5"

180 Bayberry: 2 trees Oaks @28"&21" diseased, replace 1

68 Ellison: 6 trees Ash, Oak and Maple all dying

163 Oakwood Road West: 8 trees all Ash and less than 6" dead (permit states 11, 3 were size of sticks)

104 Park Place: 6 Trees 1 Japanese Maple dead, 5 12-14" spruce dying

343 Johnston: 10 trees replacing all. Received call while on inspections that trees being removed. At the time cleanup of dead brush/branches being done. Spoke with new homeowner. She was planning on removing trees and would submit permit. She showed us what she wanted to do permit was at Borough Hall when we returned and signed off. 10 trees to be removed 3 replacements. 2 Red Oak 18" & 24" causing damage to driveway and driveway to be redone, 1 Sassafras 16" dead, 1 pine 12" dying 1 CrabApple dying, 5 Hemlock 4-10" dying replacing 30: 6 dogwood, 1 Cherry, 7 Japanese Lilacs 16 Green Giants

No permit

33 Ridge: Several Large trees removed, spoke with home owner they were going to Borough Hall to discuss.

340 Mountain: 6 trees removed