

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022

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, Doug Speeney, Coraleine Kitt, Council Member Wendy Robinson
- c. Absent—Andy Baldassarre

2. Approval of Minutes—January 24, 2022 Teleconference: The minutes were approved.

3. Reports:

- a. Tree Report—February 2022:
 - General Report—Total of 60 trees to be removed with 3 additional possible. 16 trees to be replaced with 5 additional possible. 4 properties were inspected.
 - Inspections—Karen Twisler, Senior Landscape Architect of Remington and Vernick Engineers, is the assigned Engineer for the Watchung Tree Inspections along with the EC Tree Inspector, Karen Pennett.
 - Inspection Process--Karen T. and Karen P. will meet on the 1st and 3rd Weds. of each month, if needed, for as long as it takes to complete inspections. Currently Administrator Jim Damato is doing inspections for less than 6 trees, and Karen P. has performed that function alone which raises safety concerns. Per Jim Damato, the EC Tree Inspector can say "No" to a permit where trees will be removed for no reason (Chapter 24 of Code for basis of denial). Other issues discussed were processes for follow up on tree replanting and preservation of remaining trees when 50% of a property's trees have been removed.
 - b. Planning Board—The application for the 744 Mountain Blvd. site renovation was approved, and the 2 Spruce trees will be saved.
 - c. Recycling:
 - Styrofoam—300 pounds were collected which filled a dump truck. Rachel, Karen and Doug and Council Member Robinson helped 2 DPW employees (one was sent home after an hour). Cost of DPW OT was \$227. Feedback was positive from residents. The next collection proposed for the Green Fair in spring, if it occurs, or some other date TBD.
 - New Legacy Books—The resolution was signed, and the collection is set to begin once the gravel pad and collection box are installed behind Firemen's Exempt in the spring.
 - NJDEP Statewide Recycling Information—Recently released NJDEP municipal recycling tonnage grant amounts and itemized tonnage reports were discussed. EC must remember to report Styrofoam poundage, book recycling weight, and other special recycling totals so that the Borough can get credit. Council Member Robinson will follow up on this.
- Green Team—Farmers' Market and solar and electric vehicle initiatives are moving forward.

4. Unfinished Business:

- a. Reusable Bags—300 EC bags were received. They are available to residents in Borough Hall and some were already distributed at the Styrofoam recycling event and could be available at future events depending upon supplies.
- b. Riparian Planting East of Best Lake—Doug prepared the proposal for the EC which will be forwarded by Rachel to the Borough Council for an agenda discussion item as soon as possible. Late April, around Earth Day (April 22), was proposed for the planting. Native trees and shrubs to benefit the environment will be planted to help restore the stream and stream bank in that area, which can help reduce flooding.
- c. Curbside Free-cycling—will not be pursued now.
- d. Spring Newsletter—submitted for inclusion and will describe EC activities in progress and plans for the year.

5. New Business:

a. Board of Adjustment Application—1375 Plainfield Ave.—The EC reviewed project application for 27 townhouses, including 6 affordable units. Proposal will be discussed by BOA on March 10, 2022 with variances being required. Areas of concern for the EC include tree removal and replacement, proposed waiver on requiring an environmental impact statement, impervious coverage amount, stormwater management, preservation of mature trees, and recycling accessibility. Green Building Checklist should be consulted by applicant.

b. ANJEC Plastics Webinar—Rachel attended. Signs printed by Clean Communities Council could be placed around town in advance of bag ban, coming May 4.

c. New Terra Cycle Program—Goal of zero waste in world—curbside pickup of difficult to recycle plastics such as bottle caps and food containers, and Styrofoam, also compost, available to residents. Start date is March 14. More information available at Terracyclehome.com.

d. Other—Rachel attended a Duke Farms webinar on vultures. A resident wants to discuss the Best Lake parking lot paving.

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence: None

7. Public Comment: None

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 PM with the next meeting scheduled for March 28, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

February 2022 Tree Report

Tree inspections

**trees to be removed 60 with 3 additional possible
trees to be replaced 16 with 5 additional possible
properties 4**

Karen Twisler, Senior Landscape Architect of Remington & Vernick Engineers assigned Engineer for Watchung Tree Inspections

201 Sunlit: 32 Trees Permit for 9 trees 6 trees marked in front, 25 stumps found in back
25 stumps found: 3 large rotten, 2 smaller rotten
6 trees in front marked
1 Ash not marked
Permit indicated trees, dead, ash, too close to house
Replace 10

81 Nottingham: 7 Trees many ashes concerned about falling
Has replacement plan, replanting with approx. 30 trees: Hickory, Pines, Arborvitae
Must replace 3

139 Anderson: 7 Trees

Original site visit trees not marked. Was able to determine trees from site plan
Engineer recommended 3 additional trees to be remove: 2 close to pipping and
1 too close to tree being removed.
5 replacements
if additional 3 trees removed must be replaced. Replacement totaling 8
trees

Town called with question completed second review: K.Pennett reviewed site
At 2nd site visit trees still not marked. Karen questioned one of the trees
originally approved, due steep slope. One of the 3 trees recommended to
come down also on steep slope. Reviewed with town engineer, Jason
Cline. Jason agreed with steep slope and also questioned tree to east on
slope.

5 trees on permit allowed to come down: **3 replacements**

2 trees on steep slope, further review required if approved: **2
replacements**

2 trees recommended due to pipping: **2 replacements** if removed

1 tree recommended to come down on steep slope: **1 replacement** if
removed

91 Wildwood Terrace: 14 Ash Trees no replacements