

**Watchung Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, March 25, 2024 – 7:30 PM**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.  
Present: Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Doug Speeney, Andy Stout, Denise Soppas, Jennifer Principato, Coraleine Kitt, and Paolo Marano
2. Minutes for February 26, 2024 Meeting were approved.
3. Reports
  - a. Tree Report
    - There were 4 tree inspections, 4 tree removal permits were approved. 63 trees will be removed, and 2 trees are to be replaced.
  - b. Planning Board
    - There was no meeting last month, so there was no report.
  - c. Recycling
    - No report.
  - d. Green Team
    - Due to construction at the library, Farmer's Market will be held at the Watchung Police Station again. GT priority is still Sustainable Jersey.
4. Unfinished Business
  - a. Best Lake project
    - Status of large trees for planting
      - Jim Damato and Doug will meet to determine locations for 6 new trees.
    - Sign placement
      - The sign will require concrete footings for the two posts. The DPW can handle the concrete footings.
      - The Commission discussed sign location, spreading the news about the area, and obtaining the River Friendly Certification.
  - b. Operation Pride
    - Review O.P. plan
      - Operation Pride will occur on Saturday, April 27. The cleanup hours and seedling giveaway will be 9 AM – 12 PM.
      - Rachel, Andy and Jennifer will help in the morning
      - Doug, Rachel, Andy, Denise, and Jennifer will help in the afternoon.
      - We will need a pile of mulch, more fencing, and posts. DPW will get these supplies.
      - Afternoon tasks include weeding, mulching, and repairing or replacing protective fencing around existing plantings.
      - Karen will ask Garden club members to help out.
  - c. Sewage overflows

- Two overflows occurred in January. Doug went back on Saturday during the rain and saw no overflow. He noticed a new manhole, and the manhole was screwed down tight.

5. New Business

a. BOA application – 55 Acorn Road

- Application – Applicant proposes to construct multi-sport court, considered accessory structure. Main issue: current ordinance allows for maximum of 25% impervious coverage per lot. This lot currently at 35% coverage. With additional construction will bring lot to 42% coverage. Variance required. The Commission discussed comments.

b. Ness property update

- Jennifer talked with the Mayor about possibly making Ness a conservation center, and he liked the idea. There was an Echoes Sentinel article about \$1 million going towards the Ness property.

c. Littering ordinance in town.

- Jennifer talked to the chief of police, who said the police normally don't give out tickets or summons for littering. Judge would set a fine if there is summons.

6. Special Announcements, Correspondence

a. Note from Eagle Scout – Rachel read Joshua Chang's card thanking the Commission for support of his bird box project.

b. Request from Rutgers Prep student – A high school student contacted the EC and requests support for passing a Green Amendment to the state Constitution. She wishes to speak to the EC at the next meeting. Members were in favor of this and Rachel will invite her, and the Green Team, to the April meeting.

7. Adjournment – 9:15 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2024.

# April 2024 Tree Report

**Tree Inspections: 3**

**Tree Removal permits approved: 3**

**Trees to be removed: 28**

**Trees to be replaced: 9**

**Tree Re-Inspections: 0**

**Permit Closed: 0**

**Trees replaced: 0**

D.Soppas & K.Pennett

## **Tree Inspections:**

### **10 Birchwood Land: 8 trees - Approved with 4 Replacement**

- Inspection 4/5/24. (KP)
- Permit indicated all trees dead. Several were live.
- Permit stated 7 trees. Speaking with the owner, adding dead tree in front of house along driveway. I said I would adjust current permit.
- Pines alongside of house alive, top green.
- Trees directly behind patio/barbeque area marked were live.

### **133 High Oaks: 12 trees – Approved with 3 Replacements**

- Inspection 4/5/24. (KP)
- Large trees, branches falling.
- Many Ash

### **73 Ellisen Rd: 7 Trees (5 Ash, 2 Live Oak) – Approved with 2 Replacement**

- Inspection done 4/17/24. (DS)
- A & W Landscaping & Tree Service
- 8 dead Ash, 2 live Oak
- 2 Replacement trees required: 1 at 2 ½" diameter, 1 at 4" diameter

## **Tree Re- Inspection's:**

**None**