

Watchung Environmental Commission
Thursday, May 30, 2024 Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM

Present: Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Andy Stout, Denise Soppas, Jennifer Principato, Coraleine Kitt, Paolo Marano

Absent: Doug Speeney

2. Minutes for the April 29, 2024 Teleconference were approved

3. Reports

- a. Tree Report

- There were 5 tree inspections and 5 tree removal permits were approved. 48 trees will be removed, and 0 trees will be replaced.
- 2 residents responded to letters re: tree replacements.

- b. Planning Board

- Town Planner Doug Healy spoke regarding the Borough's 4th round of housing obligations. He laid out all the dates and deadlines for the next round. Bonnie Burn project is still in the courts.

- c. Recycling

- Rachel reported that new company could pick bottle caps up at Borough Hall. Commission will re-visit in the fall.

- d. Green Team

- The Borough Farmer's market will be held at Best Lake parking lot this year. Opening day is June 4.
- The Green Team has submitted application for Bronze Level Sustainable Jersey. Submission is 90 points away from Silver Level, which they might try for. GT supports the Green Amendment. Mimansa Kumar has joined the GT and Emma Sweeney asked to join.

4. Unfinished Business

- a. Operation Pride and Best Lake project

- On Saturday May 11, Andy, Jennifer, Doug and Rachel met with Mayor Ron Jubin by Best Lake. The group got together for picture with the new sign for Echoes-Sentinel. Picture was in the paper.
- Sign-in sheets and photos and documentation from Operation Pride were sent in to the Forest Service and Arbor Day Foundation.
- The Commission may contact ANJEC and send pictures with the sign, since ANJEC featured the buffer project 2 years ago and potentially would be interested in a follow-up article.
- Doug reported that one of the bird boxes has a nest with eggs.

- b. BOA application
 - 10 Watchung Crest Drive was discussed regarding its request for granting of variances in a conservation easement.
- 5. New Business
 - a. Green Amendment to NJ Constitution
 - The Commission voted unanimously in support of the Council passing a resolution supporting the Green Amendment. Rachel and GT Chair Charlie Neiss will write a letter asking the Council to consider passing such a resolution. They will also ask the Council to allow Mimansa Kumar to make a presentation to the Council explaining the resolution.
- 6. Special Announcements, Correspondence
 - Commission discussed Borough attorney's letter that states committees do not need to record meetings anymore. However, committees are required to take minutes which must be filed with the Borough Clerk's office.
 - Rachel and Doug attended Joshua J. Cheng's Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony on May 15, 2024. The EC was acknowledged for its support of his bird box project.
- 7. Adjournment
 - The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 24th, 2024.

June 2024 Tree Report

Tree Inspections: 4

Tree Removal permits approved: 3

Trees to be removed : 39

Trees to be replaced : 13

Tree Re-Inspections: 0

Permit Closed: 0

Trees replaced: 0

D. Soppas & K. Pennett

Tree Inspections:

343 Johnston: 9 Trees (4 Oak 5 Ash) – Approved with 0 Replacement

- Inspection done 6/11/24. (KP)
- All dead/dying

90 Valley Dr: 10 Trees (9 Ash, 1 Dead Pine) – Approved with 0 Replacement

- Inspection done 6/13/24. (DS)
- EM Associates Tree Service
- 9 Ash, 1 dead pine

51 East Drive: 13 dead trees – Not Approved

- Inspection done 6/24/24. (KP)
- RG Tree Service
- trees not marked – Maria will contact them

264 Ridge Road - (17 live, 3 dead) – Approved with 13 to be replaced

- Inspection done 6/24/24. (KP and DS)
- Campos Tree Service
- New construction
- 3 dead, 4 within the building envelope, 13 live outside the envelope
- 7 need to be replaced with trees that have a 2 ½ inch diameter (trees were < 18 inches), 6 need to be replaced with trees that have a 4-inch diameter (trees were > 18 inches)
- approved with a request for a replacement plan