

Watchung Environmental Commission **September 23, 2024 – Meeting Minutes**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.
Present: Rachel Funcheon, Karen Pennett, Doug Speeney, Andy Stout, Coraleine Kitt, Denise Soppas, Jennifer Principato
2. Minutes for the August 26, 2024 Teleconference were approved.
3. Reports
 - a. Tree Report
 - Tree Inspections: 2
 - Trees to be removed: 30 - 25 per permits, 5 added
 - Trees to be replaced: unknown number of Arborvitae
 - b. Planning Board
 - PB 24-02, Raising Cane's – Plans are being revised. Application postponed until Oct. EC's approval is required for the project so EC will write a report once revised plans are reviewed. Commission discussed impervious coverage and other aspects of the application.
 - Bonnie Burn meetings –
 - The BB application has been approved and signed off on. Demolition and removal of trees can start.
 - The Commission discussed the status of the project and updates to the start of work on the property.
 - Karen spoke with Jim Damato and Jason Cline about the tree removals on the property and other environmental issues related to the project.
 - Jason Cline stated the Bonnie Burn project will be handled by BrightView Engineering, and any oversight of the project will be done by BrightView Engineering themselves.
 - c. Recycling
 - The Commission discussed recycling of household batteries, electronics, and pens.
 - d. Green Team
 - There were no meetings since the last EC meeting.
 - The Green Team submitted enough points to the Sustainable Jersey program to qualify for the silver award. Green Team has not yet heard back from SJ regarding status of their latest submission.
 - The Green Team continues to collect printer cartridges for recycling at the Farmer's Market. There will be an electronics recycling collection on October 1st and a Pedals4Progress collection on October 29th which collects used bikes and sewing machines.
4. Unfinished Business
 - a. Best Lake project

- Discussed fall plantings and maintenance. Doug asked DPW to water the 6 new trees since the weather has been dry recently. All plants doing very well. Andy and Doug will plant some new plants.
 - The EC won ANJEC's Environmental Achievement Award for its Riparian Buffer Restoration Project. It will be presented at ANJEC's Environmental Congress on Friday, 9/27/24, at Rowan College in Mt. Laurel. Rachel and Doug will attend.
- b. Green Amendment
- Discussed the status of Green Amendment. Will check with the Green Team on this. Suggested that Mimansa attend Council meeting and speak during public portion.
- c. BOA applications
- BA 24-02, 55 Acorn – They submitted revised plans for this proposed multi-sports court. EC discussed stormwater issues.
 - BA 24-06, 149 Mountain Blvd – New 2-story front porch being added. This was approved by BOA.
 - BA 24-05, 1040 Johnston Drive – EC discussed steep slope issues and removal of 67 trees. Many neighbors attended BOA meeting to express concerns about the project.
 - EC letter to BOA was not brought up during their last meeting. The EC will ask them to acknowledge the letter or read it into the record.
- d. Adopt-a-Drain
- The EC discussed the ANJEC webinar on this subject, which Rachel attended. It costs between \$800 and \$1800 to set up the program, which would add to compliance with MS-4. A possible ordinance was discussed, as was the role of DPW in cleaning the storm drains. Suggested to put in next Newsletter.
5. New Business
- a. Arbor Day Newsletter
- Arbor Day's national Fall Newsletter featured the Watchung Environmental Commission on its cover!
- b. BOA Application
- Discussed new Application: BA 24-07, 108 Johnston. Rebuilding retaining wall.
- c. New Providence FreeCycle – Rachel attended New Providence Green Team event, which was very successful. The EC discussed ideas for a similar event in Watchung.
- d. Other – Long discussion of what EC can do to protect endangered species and vernal pool at/near Bonnie Burn construction site.
6. Adjournment at 10:35 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2024

October 2024 Tree Report

Tree Inspections: 3

Tree Removal permits approved: 3

Trees to be removed: 53

Trees to be replaced: 15

Tree Re-Inspections: 0

Permit Closed: 0

Trees replaced: 0

D. Soppas & K. Pennett

Tree Inspections:

50 Century Lane – 24 Dead Trees – Approved with no replacements

- Inspection: 9/27/24. (DS)
- Sage Landscape Contractors and Tree Experts
- 1 Maple, 2 Spruce, 1 Tulip, 3 Sassafras, 1 Elm, 16 Ash (all dead)

908 Valley Drive Remove 20 Replace 15

Inspection: 10/3/2024. (KP)

- Spoke to owner, plans to add basketball/volley ball court. 3 large trees in immediate back yard to come down and all in wooded area with red ribbon around, 17. Tree map not consistent with number of trees.
- Three large trees in immediate backyard: maple, oak and unknown
- Wooded area with red ribbon around.
 - *Did not walk through ribbon area. Wooded area unsteady, a lot of brush, piles leaves/sticks.
 - *Counted 5 dead trees, difficult to count remaining. 12 per permit seemed reasonable. Total 17 in wooded area.

145 Stanie Brae Drive – 9 Dead Trees – Approved with no replacements

- Inspection: 10/21/24. (DS)
- Tavlin Tree Service and Landscaping LLC
- 2 Ash, 1 Sassafras, 4 Black Gum, 1 Red Maple, 1 White Oak (all dead)