

WATCHUNG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

5/4/17
Agenda

MINUTES

March 27, 2017

Present: Karen Pennett, Don Pote, Jim and Andy Stout, George Sopko, Sondra Epstein, Rachel Funcheon
Absent: Joan Tak

Call to Order, Minutes:

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm. The February minutes were discussed and approved as written.

Tree Report:

Sondy reported on the following:

41 Lakeview Ave: On 2/2/2017, the residents of this property took their Tree Permit and replacement plan to the Borough Council for approval to remove more than 50% of the trees on the lot. The Environmental Commission had previously denied this request. The Borough Council approved the removal of 17 trees: replace 16 trees at 2 ½" and one tree at 4". The residents plan on replacing the trees with peach, pear, fig, flowering cherry or plum.

84 Spencer Lane: On 3/17/2017. This plan was preapproved by the Board of Adjustment. Homeowner is putting a driveway along the side of the house and building a garage in the back. Homeowner is requesting the removal of 8 live trees and replacing with 6: five at 2 ½" and one at 4". Sondy suggested the Environmental Commission send a letter to the Board of Adjustment indicating the need for Environmental Commission involvement when there are more than 6 trees to be cut down.

Sondy also suggested that we put back on the agenda a discussion of an increase in the amount paid in lieu of replacing each tree.

Open Space:

Jim indicated that the Somerset Street islands would have some combination of grasses and Honey Locust Trees. Spratford Park would have Red Bud and Cherry trees. Also considered are Gold Mop Juniper, Forsythia and Honey Locust. A water line is also needed.

Planning Board:

Karen indicated that the development of the Sears property was postponed another month. The Planning Board approved the placement of antennas on top of the PSE&G power line towers. Sheds for transformers were also approved and will provide safety and noise reduction.

George reported that the East Drive affordable housing proposal has been temporarily shelved while other possible locations are reconsidered. It is anticipated that a total of 44 additional housing units will be required.

Miscellaneous:

Bottle caps: Good news – Rachel reported that the library bottle cap bin has been overflowing!

Pilgrim Pipe Line: No movement.

c: mlc, JEM 4/28/17

Ness Property: George summarized a memo he plans to forward to the Mayor and Council, Open Space Advisory Committee and Recreational Committee. It is an attempt to finalize a conceptual plan for its development. Discussion ensued and with the addition "that the All Purpose Field have minimum dimensions of 80 x 120 yards", the memo was approved.

Geese Droppings: The effectiveness of spraying grapefruit juice or Kool aid verses a more expensive commercial product was raised and discussed without a conclusion. A price comparison and effectiveness trials should be made before proceeding further.

Summer Program for adults and teens: Rachel was asked by our adult services librarian if members of our Environmental Commission would be interested in making a presentation or a series of presentations on things that could be done locally to help the environment. Rachel is considering a talk about recycling, conserving and living "green". Joan may join her with a discussion on beekeeping.

Green Fair: This year's Green Fair will take place on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22. Rachel will tend a table at the Warren Green Fair, representing Watchung's Environmental Commission. She will present information about bottle cap recycling (and collect bottle caps as well). She plans to share information on Styrofoam recycling and the Pilgrim pipeline. Joan will share the table with Rachel and plans to talk about beekeeping and the use of natural weed killers as opposed to the common toxic ones commonly used.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, April 24, 2017 at Borough Hall at 7:30 pm.



Respectfully submitted,
Don Pote, Acting Secretary,
Watchung Environmental Commission