

WWT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

March 14, 2024

The March 2024 meeting of the WWT Environmental Commission was held on Thursday, March 14, 2024 via Zoom with Ephraim Buhks calling the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Members: E. Buhks; E. Gordon; S. Parratt; I. Singh; A. Baig; L. Katz
Liaison: D. Dobromilsky Advisor: D. Parris Council Liaison: Andrea Mandel

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July, 2023 S. Parratt motioned; E. Gordon seconded;
Minutes were approved as presented.

CONTINUING BUSINESS: Project Review/Update

Community Park Gardens and Meadow – S. Parratt provided an update on the current status of the Community Park Rain Garden and proposed meadow project.

Community Solar Update – L. Katz gave an update on the NJ Community Solar Project. He will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

Street Lighting Conditions and Standards Review – E. Buhks stated the Township Engineer had requested the EC review and provide information regarding street lighting pertaining to light pollution concerns. E. Buhks and E. Gordon continue to review regulations, gather additional information and collaborate with the Township Engineer.

Planning Board – A. Baig stated Application PB23-07 Chick-Fil-A received preliminary approval at the March 6, 2024 PB meeting. The property was originally granted approval for a 5,585 SF Wawa with fuel sales (Lot 59.01) and a 4-story hotel (Lot 59.02) in November 2021. The proposed development will replace the previously approved hotel (Lot 59.02) to construct a 5,226 SF Chick-fil-A quick service restaurant with 74 interior seats (20 exterior), 73 parking spaces, dual drive-thru lanes, meal order/delivery canopies, sidewalks, landscaping, utilities, lighting. The proposed Chick-fil-A with drive-thru is a permitted use within the B-2 Neighborhood zoning district and no variances are being requested.

Arbor Day 2024 - D. Dobromilsky reported that the Arbor Day Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 9:30am at the Ronald R. Rogers Arboretum. The Shade Tree Commission will host its annual Art Contest; submissions will be on display and prizes will be awarded at the event. EC members are invited to attend and participate.

Township Council Update –A. Mandel reported that she was nominated and elected to serve as the Township Council liaison to the Environmental Commission. She stated that D. Dobromilsky attended the February 26, 2024 meeting to discuss the proposed Shade Tree Ordinance required to be adopted per recent NJDEP-mandated regulations with the Council and members of the public. D. Dobromilsky addressed several concerns including the new tree removal permit, tree replacement requirements and potential impact on budget and staff. A. Mandel reported the township budget was submitted to the council and the first budget meeting was held on March 7, 2024. The remaining meetings are scheduled for March 19 and 21, 2024.

NEW BUSINESS:

New Tree Ordinance - D. Dobromilsky reported that the new ordinance is still under review and being finalized by township staff. It would require all property owners to apply for and obtain a tree removal permit and may require an owner be subject to plant replacement tree(s) on the property. The number of required replacements are subject to the size of the removed trees. If the replacement trees cannot be planted on the property, owners would be subject to paying a fee for the Township to replant trees elsewhere. Exemptions include owners of single and two-family properties up to one acre in size being allowed to remove up to three healthy trees within a five-year period with no mitigation requirement. In addition, "Dangerous Trees" would not be included and may be removed without any replacement tree requirement or application fee. The Shade Tree Commission and township staff will continue to review and develop the ordinance before the deadline to officially adopt it by May 1, 2024. A list of invasive species will be incorporated that will not be allowed to be planted as part of the mitigation requirements. D. Dobromilsky will continue to provide updates to the EC as the process continues.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Tomaro, Administrative Secretary
WWT Environmental Commission