**Washington Township Green Team**

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting**

**Monday December 3rd, 2018 6:30pm Minutes**

**Washington Township Municipal Building**

Members Present: Chairman Dan Ross, Interim Treasurer Paula Ross, Valerie Walsh. Patty Homer, Liaison Ken Short

Members of the public: Claire Cooney

Others Present: Shade Tree Committee Chairman Steven Zaikowski, Township Committeeman Gregg Forsbrey

Called to Order at: 6:31pm

The Pledge of allegiance was recited before the meeting commenced.

1. **Shade Tree Commission and Green Team:**

At the request of the Green TeamSteven Zaikowski, Chairman of theShade Tree Committee, agreed to be our monthly speaker. He explained to the group that his committee serves as an advisory committee to the township and planning board. They speak to issues involving the appropriateness of particular trees for various locations, how to properly plant and care for trees, and bring requests for replacement tree plantings to the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Steven explained to the group that the focus has largely been on replacing trees that were lost during Hurricane Sandy. He explained that some of the hardest hit areas in the township were along Quail Run and Falcon Drive in the Nestling Wood development. Specifically, they offer bare-root saplings which are typically planted in the spring. They also offer more mature planting options as well for immediate curb appeal which range closer to 8 ft tall in height. Steven explained that the DPW assists by physically digging the holes and loosening up the soil for the spring plantings, after the Shade Committee has come and done the mark-outs. Like most committees here in town, they rely heavily on volunteer support, and they have been fortunate to have partnered with local Boy Scouts in the past, who have helped plant over 100 trees or so in the past few years.

Mr. Zaikowski explained that the Township has a sharing of services and acquirement agreement with nearby Mt. Olive for planting and ordering. So far they have already ordered 35 swamp white oaks for planting along Kings Highway, as these trees are well suited to the location, and they require the least amount of care in terms of fertilizers. In the past the committee has also planted flowering plum trees in the township as well, but they are particularly susceptible to black nut disease. Steven explained to the group that typically what happens whenever a new development goes in, is that the project developer will pay for the trees and the committee would then go back and assess the site, post construction, to determine whether or not it meets their expectations. Again, they typically recommend trees which require the least amount of care for these applications. Mr. Zaikowski explained that the Shade Tree Committee is constantly contending with emerging diseases to our hardwood trees. He mentioned that our NJ State Tree the red oak is susceptible to the immerging issue of bacterial leaf scorch. Gregg stated that there are also currently 756 ash trees in town that are going to be affected by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and will subsequently need to be addressed as well. Ken said that he believes Morris County is going to be saddled with the high costs of removing approximately 8000 ash trees in total. Steven mentioned that the committee was looking into the possibility of putting hangers on the mailboxes to let residents know they have ashes on their street that will need to come down. Steven informed the group that they had given about 100 or so EAB brochures to be disseminated to the public through the township library. They also handed out 250 tree seedlings at the paper shredding last year. Dan thanked Mr. Zaikowski for his time and for bringing the group up to speed with what initiatives the Shade Tree Committee was currently involved in, and offered that he would very much like to see the two township committees work together on projects in the future. Paula used this opportunity to reiterate the Green Team’s desire to explore the possibility of applying for the Roots for Rivers Grant next year, and explained the basis of the grant to Steven. The Nature Conservancy/ Watershed Institute grant ranges from $1,000-$20,000 and provides funding for protective tree tubing, maintenance, bare root saplings, and up to gallon sized shrubs for riparian planting on the township’s lands. Dan thought that perhaps Raritan Headwaters Association might be a good partner for the grant. Steven advised that if the trees that would be purchased would be container grown, then it would be best to do the planting in the spring.

**Old Business:**

**Sustainable Jersey:**

Gregg mentioned that he had come across several sustainable jersey initiatives that we might ask the shade tree committee to assist us with documenting. He also informed the group that he brought the solar ordinance to the Township Committee’s attention and it got kicked back for more revisions. Gregg stated that in his estimation, the township has been undertaking several actions which would qualify us for about 85 SJ points, which we aren’t getting credit for currently. Gregg said that he will bring the 5 actions which the Shade Tree committee might assist us with to their upcoming meeting on Tuesday. Dan thanked Gregg for taking the lead on that, and it was agreed that everyone in the group should look into specific actions they could work on independently and report back on their progress. Ken informed the group that we might have a volunteer grant writer joining the township as well. He is a retired Superintendent from a school district in Bergen County and will bring valuable experience and institutional knowledge to the position. The group agreed that he could be a very useful asset for sure!

Valerie mentioned that she has been looking into advancing the anti-idling program is well, and she believes that it is very attainable. She mentioned that the schools all have the signage in place already, and there are plenty of township businesses where we can also put new signs up as well. At the request of Mr. Short, Valerie agreed to get a sample ordinance to Administrator Andrew Coppola for his review and to have it brought before the full township committee for a vote.

**Mission Statement**:

Dan read the mission statement that he prepared based on input from last month’s meeting and it was determined that it would be emailed out to everyone and a vote would be taken next month, as we were short several members at the night’s meeting.

**Administrative Treasurer’s Report/ Voting on October’s Minutes :**

Paula read the treasurer’s report to the group. She mentioned that she had signed the purchase order for the purchase of the new canopy which was purchased for the Green Festival and that the expense will be reflected in next month’s report. Paula told the group that we received a $50 check for participating in clean communities in October. She informed the group that we didn’t get as much as we had thought we would, due to the fact that we didn’t recruit as many volunteers as some of the other groups participating and focused on a county road as opposed to a township one.

Dan stated that the committee positions will be all up for reappointment, and that he and Ken would be conducting the interviews in December. Dan told the group that all positions will be up for grabs in 2019 including chair, and that he would like to see someone appointed to the role of secretary and possibly have a vice chair appointed as well. The decision was made to put off voting on November’s minutes until more members of the group were present. Both November and December’s minutes will be approved at the January monthly meeting.

**Harrington Fields Pollinator Meadow:**

The group discussed when the meadow should be mowed and Ken said that he would ask the DPW to mow the meadow on our behalf. Dan mentioned that the trails grant has been finalized and that the official announcement will come on December 12th. The group will continue looking into working on signage for the trail and will work with the ad hoc trails committee on the actual trail work. Paula reminded everyone that we would be placing the benches along the trails once the trail work is done.

**New Business:**

**Market at Long Valley-**

Dan informed the group that Kelsey Saccente is interested in taking on the position, and she will be joining the green team to serve as a liaison to the Market Committee. Dan mentioned that she has been invited to attend next month’s meeting so everyone could meet her and ask any questions they might have. After some discussion it was agreed that this year’s market will run from June-October, taking advantage of a longer season by starting sooner, but ending around the same time as last year.The group will continue to discuss planning for next year’s market at the January meeting. Ken said that he was concerned about whether or not we could both pay Kelsey and ask her to be a volunteer as well. He made the suggestion that we should reach out to township administrator Coppola and ask his opinion. Dan agreed to follow up with him. Ken also suggested that we might consider reaching out to big box stores such as Target for sponsorship for the upcoming Market season.

**Sustainable Jersey:**

Dan recapped some of the initiatives the group is currently looking into, and what still needs to get done. In addition to the actions that we might be able to work with the Shade Tree Committee on, and the Anti-Idling initiative, there are also several actions we can work with the DPW and the township on. Dan mentioned that we are up for re-certification this year, and that anything we are hoping to be certified for would have to be submitted before June.

**Fundraising/ New Grants:**

Dan said that aside from the Roots for Rivers grant, there are also a few smaller grants they might look into, and if the Environmental Commission isn’t interested in pursuing the ANJEC OSS grant, we might also look into applying for that one again in April.

**Miscellaneous:**

Paula mentioned that although the decision had been made to order more bags, there is currently no bag holder for carry in carry out at Cataract Park, township might need to put one out there. Ken offered to reach out and ask to have one made, or purchased and thought that they could put it on the kiosk at the trailhead.

**Outreach:**

Danmentioned that in addition to improving the outreach and promoting the Market, we should continue to build upon our success from projects, social media, and other outlets of getting more folks aware of the Green Team and our initiatives. He hoped that the improved Mission Statement might also address the question we typically receive of what exactly we do for the township.

**Open Discussion:**

Claire was asked why she was interested in attending the monthly meeting, and was asked whether or not she might be interested in joining the group and helping our with our projects and initiatives? While she was quite impressed with everything the group is currently accomplishing, she said that she would be happy to assist with projects, but was not interested in joining the Green Team at this time.

**Call to adjourn:** 8:05pm