

BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
April 7, 2026
REGULAR MEETING

The Public Meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Norwood was held via Zoom on the above date.

Ms. Rosenthal stated that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of the 2026 Environmental Commission

Brielle Olshan
Karin Rosenthal
Michaela Redden
Deirdre Kessler
Phil Maljevic
Nancy Congiusti

Also Present:

Lindsay Volpitta, Commission Secretary

Ms. Redden made a motion to approve the March 3, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Maljevic seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously agreed, with the exception of Ms. Congiusti who abstained.

Community Events

Ms. Rosenthal said Arbor Day will be celebrated at Norwood Public School on April 24th at 2pm. The Environmental Commission will be providing saplings and Councilwoman Hausmann will be providing flowers for the children to plant.

Ms. Rosenthal suggested scheduling a hike now that the weather is getting nicer. She will also contact the Palisades Park Commission and asked Ms. Kessler to reach out to Nature Marc to schedule guided hikes. Ms. Olshan suggested a hike on April 19th at 10:30am.

Ms. Rosenthal said she likes an idea Ms. Congiusti had, to tour Closter Farms. She will contact Closter Farms for more information.

Ms. Olshan suggested having a garden cleanup. Ms. Rosenthal gave a date of April 25th at 10:30am.

Tree Preservation Ordinance

Ms. Rosenthal said that all municipalities must adopt a tree removal and replacement ordinance. The Borough has sent the existing ordinance to the DEP for review and approval but has yet to receive a response. The ordinance must fulfill specific requirements set forth by DEP. She feels the current ordinance is not strong enough.

Mr. Maljevic advised the Commission that in 2022 the Environmental Commission reviewed the tree ordinances of the surrounding towns and met with the Closter Environmental Commission to discuss the tree ordinance. Using what they learned the Commission developed a tree ordinance and presented it to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Maljevic noted that it is understood that the Commission is only an advisory Commission and can only make recommendations. The governing body chose to keep the existing ordinance.

Ms. Olshan said the current ordinance focuses on clear cutting and not what is more typical such as one or two trees being removed. The current ordinance allows for three trees or not more than 20% of trees on the property to be removed. Replacement of trees is not required in the existing ordinance. The application needs to be stronger and more stringent.

Mr. Maljevic said the DEP ordinance creates a fund to replace trees for people that cannot afford to replace one on their own. The town would pay to replace the tree.

Ms. Olshan said there are stormwater regulations that must be followed.

Mr. Maljevic said he is concerned that there will come a time when towns that have not adopted the DEP ordinance will have stricter regulations and it is important to get in front of this now.

Ms. Redden read a letter she wrote as both a resident and a Commission members. She feels that residents are directly affected by the clear cutting applications that are approved. A house behind her was approved for clear cutting and removed the trees along the backyard that gave them privacy. The homeowners put up arborvitaes along the sides but did not replace the trees in the back. The property across the street was just given permission to remove twenty-nine trees. The DEP tree ordinance was effective January 2025 and the governing body is not following that ordinance while waiting for approval on the ordinance that was submitted. The DEP ordinance requires the replacement of trees equal to or greater in diameter of the trees that were removed. The governing body rejected the Commissions proposed tree ordinance and ignored the DEP tree ordinance. The submitted ordinance is expected to be denied. The governing body is acting illegally while waiting to hear from the DEP. The Mayor and Council approve 100% of clear cutting applications that come before them without thought to

the neighbors, how many trees are being removed, or how the environment is being affected. The authority to approve clear cutting applications should be removed from the Mayor and Council and given to the Environmental Commission/Shade Tree Commission. There should be a moratorium on applications until the Borough's ordinance complies with the DEP ordinance.

Ms. Rosenthal thanked Ms. Redden for reading her letter and said it does not feel like their voices are being heard.

Ms. Olshan said she would like to discuss reasonable next steps. Ms. Rosenthal said she would like the subcommittee to meet to discuss the ordinance. The subcommittee is made up of Ms. Rosenthal, Ms. Olshan, and Ms. Redden. Resident volunteers are welcome to join as well.

Mr. Maljevic said it would make a bigger impact if residents attended the Mayor and Council meetings to express their thoughts. It would have a larger impact if meetings were attended or emails were written. Ms. Redden suggested starting an online petition.

Ms. Redden made a motion to authorize Ms. Olshan to contact the county case manager about the status of the submitted ordinance and to ask that a stricter ordinance be approved. Ms. Kessler seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously approved.

Ms. Redden and Ms. Olshan asked to be informed whenever a clear cutting application is listed on a Mayor and Council agenda or any other business that would involve the Commission.

Ms. Kessler said she has been receiving emails regarding an environmental grant. Ms. Rosenthal said the Commission has received the grant in the past but will need a new project before applying again.

Commission Goals

Ms. Rosenthal informed the Commission members that herself, Mr. Maljevic, Ms. Olshan and Ms. Congiusti attended the last Mayor and Council meeting and gave a presentation highlighting the activities and accomplishments and future goals of the Commission.

Budget

Ms. Volpitta advised that there is no update with the budget. There is a budget meeting scheduled for April 15th and she hopes to have an update for the May meeting.

Planning Board Update

Ms. Volpitta advised the Commission that the Planning Board will be discussing the Housing Plan at the May meeting and advised the Commission that the plan is on the Borough website if they would like to review it before the meeting. Ms. Volpitta also advised that at the April Planning Board meeting, a three lot subdivision was approved for 711 Broadway. There will be one house facing Broadway and two houses facing Tappan Road.

Ms. Olshan made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Maljevic seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously agreed.

Ms. Ailie Silbert, Esq asked for clarification on who was listed as the Borough of Norwood on the Zoom. Ms. Volpitta advised that she is the secretary to the Environmental Commission.

Ms. Olshan made a motion to close the meeting to the public. Mr. Maljevic seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously agreed.

Ms. Kessler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Maljevic seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously agreed.

Ms. Rosenthal thanked the Commission and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsay Volpitta
Commission Secretary