

BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
July 20, 2023
REGULAR MEETING

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

Mr. Maljevic 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 Board:

Ms. Brielle Olshan	Present
Ms. Karin Rosenthal	Present
Mr. Walter Deptuch	Absent
Mr. Phil Maljevic	Present
Ms. Barbara Vanderbeck	Present
Mr. Kamal Hoon	Present
Mr. Jim Elling	Present
Ms. Brigitha Tray	Absent
Ms. Siddhi Samant	Absent

Also Present:

Lindsay Volpitta, Commission Secretary

Mr. Hoon made a motion to approve the June 13, 2023, Environmental Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Maljevic seconded the motion and the Commission unanimously agreed, with the exception of Ms. Rosenthal, and Mr. Elling who were not present at the June meeting.

Community Garden Update

Ms. Rosenthal stated that the community garden is doing great. There was a community day last Saturday, but no one came. Ms. Olshan suggested giving more notice of when the community days will be. Ms. Olshan said anyone is welcome to help tend to the garden. There is help needed with weeding, fertilizing, pruning, and harvesting. Mr. Hoon recommended having a picnic and working in the garden.

Tree Ordinance Update

Ms. Rosenthal feels the ordinance needs to be softened to gain approval from the Mayor and Council. Mr. Hoon said he researched the ordinances in other towns and found on

in Greenberg, NY that is stricter than what the Environmental Commission is proposing. Mr. Maljevic said the Commission looked at ordinances from Alpine, Closter, Tenafly, and Harrington Park and they were all more stringent than the proposed ordinance. Ms. Olshan said the ordinance is not only important for the applicant to understand, but more so for the enforcement official.

The Commission began by addressing each of Councilman Brizzolara's comments one at a time.

Comment one (1) – Would the adjoining property owner be notified of tree removal.

Ms. Olshan said the original ordinance had a stipulation where the neighbors would be notified of tree work. This was removed from the proposal but can be added in for the requirements when four (4) or more trees are being removed. Mr. Elling felt it was important for the neighbors to be notified, especially if the tree is on both properties.

Ms. Olshan directed the Commissions attention to pages 3-4 of the proposed ordinance and the chart that specifies the requirements.

A) Removal of one (1) to two (2) trees: the property owner must file an application.

B) Removal of three (3) trees: the property owner must file an application, pay an application fee of \$25.00, provide a removal plan showing which trees will be removed, and provide a mitigation plan.

C) Removal of four (4) or more trees: the property owner must file an application, pay an application fee of \$25.00, provide a plan showing which trees will be removed, provide a mitigation plan, and have a review completed by the Borough engineer. An additional requirement of neighbor notification can be added to this step.

Mr. Elling asked what would happen if the tree was dangerous. Ms. Olshan stated the ordinance has provisions for dead and/or hazardous trees. These trees can be removed with only an application being filed.

Mr. Hoon asked who is responsible for drawing the tree removal and mitigation plans. Ms. Olshan said the applicant could have a planner or arborist provide those documents. Mr. Maljevic also stated that a google earth overlay or survey of the property showing the affected trees would also be acceptable.

Comment two (2) – What is the purpose of the application.

Ms. Olshan replied that the purpose of the application is to track the tree removals and help with enforcement.

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Comment three (3) – Do these requirements also apply to the Borough.

Ms. Rosenthal stated these requirements would not apply to the Borough because the Borough would be removing trees that would help the municipality. Mr. Elling and Mr. Hoon asked if this would apply to landmark trees. Ms. Rosenthal stated that Norwood does not have any trees with the official designation of landmark tree.

Comment four (4) – Would the Mayor and Council be removed from the decision process.

Ms. Olshan stated that the governing body would no longer be involved in the decision process. Mr. Maljevic said the Planning Board would make the final decision of tree removal for new construction. Ms. Olshan said there would be an appeals committee to oversee the appeal process. Ms. Volpitta explained that any official committee would need to be designated by the Mayor.

Ms. Rosenthal noted that the cost and burden to the application is the biggest complaint that was received. Ms. Olshan would like the police department to enforce the ordinance on the weekends when Borough staff is not available.

At this time the Commission will table the tree ordinance discussion.

EV Charging Stations

Mr. Maljevic advised the Commission members of the proper bid process. Ms. Olshan alerted the Commission that the vendor they would like to use is under State Contract and the Borough would not need to go out to bid. Mr. Hoon asked if it would be better to hold off until a standard charger is decided upon. Mr. Maljevic informed the Commission that there are adaptors available to become compatible with other vehicles and to check with the vendor about having that as an option.

Community Events

Ms. Rosenthal informed the Commission that the Norwood Public School K-4 Principal contacted her to ask about a partnership with the Environmental Commission. The school would like to start a farm to table curriculum for the younger children. Ms. Rosenthal and Ms. Olshan will meet with the principal and discuss options such as visits to the community garden. The dates of the community days will be put on a flyer and sent to the PTO President for an email blast and also sent to the principal for the newsletter.

August Meeting Date

The August meeting will be changed from August 8th to August 15th.

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Public Comment

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

There was no one in the public who wished to speak.

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

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

Ms. Olshan thanked the Commission and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsay Volpitta, Commission Secretary