

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE  
BOROUGH OF SADDLE RIVER  
HELD: FEBRUARY 23, 2015**

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**PRESENT:** Commission Members: Nik Aktas, Nicholas Turturro, Ron Yates, Council Rep., Paul Schulstad, Jeff Liva: Planning Board Rep.

**ABSENT:** Commission Chairman Bob LaViano, Emily Kaufman, Jerry DeCrosta

**PRESIDING:** Commission Member Ron Yates called the meeting to order at 6:35pm; Commission Secretary Joy Convertini read the following statement:

**PUBLIC NOTICE:** “Notice of this meeting in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act Chapter 231 of the laws of 1975, has been given by posting a notice of the scheduled dates of all regular meetings of the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Saddle River on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and in the office of the Borough Clerk and by emailing a notice thereof to the Herald News and The Record on December 31, 2014 and on the Borough website.”

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made to approve the November 24, 2014 minutes by Ron Yates, Second by Nik Aktas  
Roll Call Vote: AYES: Unanimous

**WORK SESSION:**

**Roadside Appearance:** Ron Yates stated that the Environmental Commission encouraged residents to clean up their properties of litter and landscape debris in a recent Borough Newsletter. He further stated that he feels that there has been a significant improvement in this area but there is a need for continued progress in keeping roadways clean.

Jeff Liva stated that he suggested the Borough hold a town wide chipping day in order to encourage residents to clean up the landscape debris on their property. The need for increased street sweeping in Saddle River was also discussed and the Commission was in agreement that this service should be provided more frequently as road salt is extremely detrimental to the waterways.

**Invasive Plant Control:** Ron Yates stated that invasive bamboo is becoming a significant problem in Saddle River, with many plants blocking visibility onto major roadways throughout town. He further stated that he would like to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council to prohibit the planting of bamboo in Saddle River as well as making a list of invasive plants available to residents.

**Hazardous Tree Removal:** Ron Yates stated that a plan is in place to encourage the removal of dead and hazardous trees, both on private property, county roads and Borough roads.

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**Tree Planting & Ordinance Status:** Ron Yates explained the Tree City Designation. The Tree City USA® program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities that more than 135 million Americans call home.

Saddle River's application has been in progress for some time and was awaiting the adoption of the amended tree ordinance. Ron Yates further stated that Saddle River has now met all requirements for submission and the Mayor and Council will do the actual filing after the State Forester grants approval.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Nik Aktas stated that he is working on procuring a tree to donate to the Wandell School Class of 2015. Additionally, hardwood trees will be planted along the fence area between the Wandell School property and the Safety Complex.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Paul Schulstad asked the Environmental Commission as well as the public, what course of action they feel the Mayor and Council should take with the current deer management problem in Saddle River. Additionally, he asked what the perception is regarding what the residents want regarding this issue. Ron Yates stated that the Environmental Commission met jointly with the Board of Health on October 27, 2014 and unanimously agreed that there is a significant deer problem and urgent action must be taken to reduce the deer population. He further stated that they are a public safety concern on roadways, they are a public health risk due to the spread of Lyme disease, are the cause of significant destruction to both the native and residential landscape, and are responsible for attracting unwanted predators, such as coyotes which are on the rise in Saddle River. A bow hunting plan organized by a professional outfit was discussed as the best course of action. An amendment to the town ordinance permitting hunting, the permitting process and adopting a detailed bow hunting plan all must take place prior to any action being taken.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Andreas Ohl, 185 West Saddle River Road stated that there should be a community out-reach regarding the deer management issue as there are people that have vested interest in animal welfare. He further stated that Hastings-on Hudson has been successful in implementing a contraception program, which should be evaluated. Nik Aktas stated that this method may be cost prohibitive; Mr. Ohl stated that Saddle River is a wealthy town and he would be happy to host an effort to raise the funding for the contraception alternative. He was in agreement that the deer population is significant and some action must be taken. Fencing properties was discussed and it was determined that this as well as chemical deer deterrents is not a viable alternative.

Paul Schulstad asked how the Borough should poll residents on the deer management issue and all were in agreement that a public forum would be necessary to get a better idea of the general consensus.

All were in agreement that either course of action would need to be continued on an on-going basis.

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Paul Schulstad stated that he feels that the deer management issue should be the charge of the Environmental Commission. He further stated that a majority of the Council members are in favor of a cull and the best course of action would be to place this issue on a referendum in November. He encouraged submitting a letter to the Town Journal, expressing the views of the Environmental Commission as well.

Nick Turturro stated that increasing the public awareness about the deer problem and the risks associated with the increasing deer population in Saddle River will be beneficial moving forward.

A letter was received from PETA regarding this issue, making their position known, however they are not residents of Saddle River.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Marilyn Goldfisher, 124 West Saddle River Road stated that the Saddle River is in need of follow-up dredging. Ron Yates requested that Ms. Goldfisher submit a detailed report on this matter, outlining this problem. A five year permit was issued with the Bergen County Mosquito Commission so follow-up dredging can be executed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the regular meeting of the Environmental Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy C. Convertini  
Secretary