



New Jersey Community Forestry Council
Meeting Minutes
In-Person and Virtual Meeting, FREC
March 9, 2023; 10:00 AM

The March bi-monthly meeting of the New Jersey Community Forestry Council (“Council”) was called to order by Brian McDonald at 10:00 a.m. and the Open Public Meetings Act notice was read. The notice was also available in the meeting packet. The roll call was taken by Ms. Dudas.

Members Present: Kristin Ace, Matthew Simons, Lisa Simms, Dr. Jason Grabosky, Dr. Melanie McDermott, Pam Zipse, Carl Bowles, Lori Jenssen, Steve Chisholm, Joseph Greipp, Barry Emens & Mark Beamish.
Excused: Bill Brash, Vinh Lang & Neil Blitz.

NJ Forest Service Staff Present: State Forester Todd Wyckoff, Policy, Technical & Operational Advisor Terri Slack, Assistant Regional Forester & Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator Brian McDonald, Forester Levon Bigelow, Grants Administrator Patricia Shapella, Grants Assistant Gail Harrje and Forestry Assistant Sherry Dudas. Quorum was met upon completion of roll call.

Ethics and Cannabis Training ensued immediately after roll call.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for 1/12/2023 Meeting

Mr. McDonald called attention to the January meeting minutes. A short discussion took place regarding requested edits. Mr. Simons moved to approve; Ms. Zipse seconded. Mr. McDonald called for a vote on the minutes. Mr. Chisholm and Mr. Greipp abstained; otherwise, the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes as amended.

State Forester’s Report

State Forester Todd Wyckoff introduced new CFC member Joseph Greipp, who then gave a short biography and was given his appointment certificate by Mr. Wyckoff. CFC members and staff then introduced themselves to Mr. Greipp. Mr. Wyckoff also advised that Ms. Zipse has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair of the CFC.

Mr. Bigelow completed a draft of the revised guidelines which were reviewed by the Guidelines Subcommittee, with another Subcommittee meeting being scheduled soon and the hope being that the draft will be before the CFC at its May meeting.

Mr. Wyckoff reported that Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) staff submitted an application to the US Forest Service for an Inflation Reduction Act (“IRA”) grant which, if approved and funded, would bring more Environmental Justice (“EJ”) communities into active participation in the UCF program. A discussion ensued regarding how the grant, if awarded, would be implemented in NJ and which communities would benefit. UCF staff met with staff of the DEP’s Stormwater Program regarding their sample tree ordinance and shared comments and resources; Stormwater Program staff is set to disseminate their sample stormwater ordinance to municipalities along with a sample tree ordinance. One of the requirements of the DEP’s Stormwater Permitting Program is that for municipalities seeking a MS-4 permit they must have a tree protection ordinance in place.

UCF staff encouraged Stormwater staff to consider drafting a model ordinance as broadly as possible, recognizing that NJ's municipalities and counties are quite diverse.

He further reported that the US Forest Service will be conducting a cooperative management review of NJ's Forestry program in May. Mr. Bowles, Mr. Wyckoff, Mr. McDonald and Chair Brash had a meeting to brainstorm with AWWA members about tree care education possibilities for DPW workers.

Federal funding opportunities for Urban and Community Forestry work was discussed. Arbor Day planning is ongoing and the Arbor Day Proclamation is on its way to the Governor's office.

Chairman's Report

New Business:

Fiscal Report

Pat Shapella reported on the fiscal state of the program, which was provided in the packet.

Program Report

Mr. Bigelow provided the Program report. No new community forestry management plans were received since the last meeting, since the Guidelines are being revised and no new communities have submitted plans. However, there are four communities that have Green Communities grants so those will be coming in in the near future. With respect to the Accreditation status of communities, there are currently 136 accredited communities, and that number is expected to grow to around 150.

Legislative Issues

Ms. Slack provided a report in the packet.

Subcommittee Reports

The Guidelines Subcommittee will be meeting soon.

Unfinished Business

None.

Ms. Zipse announced that the Shade Tree Federation has resumed its Tree Talk series and that its Conference will be October 26 & 27, 2023 in Cherry Hill, NJ. Mr. McDonald reported that himself as well as other attendees of the meeting attended the ISA conference in March and it was wonderful. Ms. Jenssen announced the NJ Forestry Association meeting which will be in-person and next week. Mr. Hart and Mr. Wyckoff will be there.

Public Comment: None.

Mr. McDonald adjourned the meeting at 11:50am.