

Demarest Environmental Commission Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2026
7:00 PM
118 Serpentine Road, Demarest, NJ 07627

I. Open Meeting

“This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Open Meetings Act of NJ.”

II. Attendance

The following committee members were present: James Chang, Rajiv Krishnamurthy, Ted Alevrontas, Noelle Tutunjian, David Lerner, Angela Rodin

III. New Business

Budget / Funding

- Discussion of possible \$3K budget
 - Questioned whether funds are allocated or still need approval? (uncertain but Andrea will check).
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Garden Club Collaboration

- Motion proposed to support the Demarest Garden Club fundraiser (4th & 5th grade program).
 - Plan includes:
 - Lecture at the gazebo.
 - Hands-on planting activity (kids bring gloves).
 - Timing: No set date yet, tentatively around Memorial Day.
 - Question raised:
 - Does the Garden Club have its own budget?
 - Will they fundraise or self-fund, or do they always rely on the EC budget?
 - - Garden Club officers Jeanie Vargason (President), Maureen?
 - Funding this activity was approved with next year (2027) conditional: EC wants more understanding about the club, its resources and activities.
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EC Communications / Engagement

- David offered to create an engagement email with the surrounding EC's.
 - Noted:
 - High volume of email exchanges before the February engagement.
 - wish to track challenges and accomplishments, with a goal to maintain momentum.
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Community Solar

- Noelle:
 - Roadblocks identified.
 - Looking into community solar advocates to speak with the county.
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Environmental Topics

- Rajiv:
 - Read aloud issues related to invasive Norway Maples in NJ. *The Invasive Species Management Act has been enacted in New Jersey (Jan 2026?), includes the prohibition of the sale, distribution, import, export, and propagation of certain invasive species, including the Norwegian Maple.*
 - Suggested educational component for citizens in either suggested removals and new tree selection.
 - To be coordination with the Shade Tree Commission; intention to also work with a master gardener
 - Action: Tree inventory around town (Teddy to follow up).
 - Topic to be revisited **next month**.
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Upcoming Events/ Town Cleanup Day

- Saturday April 25 10am-3pm:
 - Canoe Day/Baseball Opening
 - Birdhouse activity
 - Time blocks:

- - 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
 - Town Cleanup Day Planning:
 - Noelle visited the DPW to find 25 sets EC asset: new tongs, but nothing else. Nature Center offered their tongs if more needed.
 - May 2nd Saturday is selected for the EC cleanup- needs promotion. To coincide with the Demarest Nature Center Nature Walk (11am-Noon? If so Town cleanup to run Noon-1:30pm)
 - The Nature Center had suggested alternative sites due to earlier clean up that showed the Wakelee Field as being reasonably devoid of trash. Ex. Stream under the bridge/ County Road/ former leaf composting pile site by the hockey pond
 - Advertise: gloves BYO
 - Bags purchase (James to check with CFO Andrea Johe. Will research and use thinner biodegradable 30 gallon plastic bags if they can be strong enough for carrying broken glass, sharp objects etc.)
 - Demarest now has an Amazon account (tax free). Can purchase via account and get reimbursed via voucher.
 - The EC can sort the filled bags upon return for recyclable versus organic garbage.
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Composting promotion discussion

- Cost: \$192/year
 - Cost and weekly transport to central collection point in car were challenges noted in Noelle's discussions
 - Noelle asked about EC budget covering parts of the annual fee for fixed income seniors
 - Discussed possible negotiating for volume discount (however cost point is already low so unlikely) and subsidizing.
 - Noelle to contact 25 current residents
 - Plan to request Canoe Day Table to promote composting benefits
 - Encourage person-to-person engagement.
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No Mow May / Pollinator Initiative discussion

- Mention of prior effort (2 years ago) and pros/cons. Seasonal difference between originating UK versus NJ.
 - Objectives:
 - Gas reduction
 - Pollinator support
 - Continue into Slow Mow Summer.
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Recycling

- Andrea discussed good impression of tour to the IWS North Arlington recyclables sorting facility

IV. Adjourn Meeting

Motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting,