

Demarest Environmental Commission Minutes
Tuesday, May 26, 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, Angela Rodin, Rajiv Krishnamurthy, Noelle Tutunjian, David Lerner. Absent committee member: Ted Alevrontas

III. Old Business

- a. Community engagement / NVD liaison / social media
- b. Northern Valley EC engagement
- c. Community solar
- d. Native tree recommendations / invasive species

IV. New Business

- a. SOAR Education program: Lillian Lugo, founder of SOAR science programs, presented to the EC. Stephen Tillack of the Demarest Nature Center is looking to organize summertime science programming at the Demarest Library, which will be run by SOAR. Given each session costs \$450, Stephen is asking the Demarest Library and the EC to work with the DNC and contribute \$150 each per session. The original proposal was for a 6 session summer program. Given the short advance notice and uncertainty as to the program's success, we discussed attempting a pilot program during the summer of 2026, perhaps 2-3 sessions. If these are successful we can consider a full 6 session program in 2027. The EC took a vote and passed a motion to provide financial support of up to \$150 per session for up to 3 sessions. This funding is contingent upon the DNC and Demarest Library each contributing the same \$150 and the Library providing the venue.
- b. 75 Anderson Ave zoning variance: The EC reviewed the application for a D Variance at the upcoming Joint Planning Board meeting. In particular, the EC studied the property's proximity to wetlands and the proposed increased in Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The EC expressed concern that this increased FAR could impact water runoff into wetlands. This feedback will be taken into account by the Joint Planning Board.
- c. Community composting household sign-ups: Noelle Tutunjian is leading efforts to increase the number of participants, which is currently 23. We maintain our goal of doubling that number. Noelle led an outreach effort to current participants to solicit feedback and ask participants for help recruiting others. We continue to consider whether part of the EC budget should be used to subsidize the program, perhaps specifically related to new members (i.e., a short-term sign-up subsidy). Noelle volunteered to organize materials explaining the benefits of composting and will equip others with materials that can be used for door-to-door knocking.
- d. Community clean-up debrief: The EC agreed that the attempted Spring clean-up effort wasn't successful as measured by turnout. We discussed ways to better engage the community for future events. We also discussed the need to more clearly identify specific areas in town that require cleaning up, as many areas close to the Duck Pond are well maintained.

V. Adjourn Meeting

Motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting