

New Jersey Community Forestry Council
Meeting Minutes
In-Person and Virtual Meeting, Forest Resource Education Center
December 12, 2024; 10:00 AM

The December bi-monthly meeting of the New Jersey Community Forestry Council ("Council") was called to order by Chairperson Bill Brash at 10am and the Open Public Meetings Act notice was read. The notice was also available in the meeting packet. The roll call was taken by Brian McDonald.

Members Present: Kristin Ace, Mark Beamish, Bill Brash, Neil Blitz, Steve Chisholm, Amanda Diamond, Barry Emens, Dr. Jason Grabosky, Joseph M. Greipp, Tim Ifill, Vinh Lang, Michael Martini, Dr. Melanie McDermott, Ryan Metz, Dr. Matthew Olson, Pam Zipse

Excused: Carl Bowles, Lori Jenssen, Lisa Simms

Absent: Marty Mayes

NJ Forest Service Present: State Forester Todd Wyckoff, Patricia Shapella, Brian McDonald, Michael Hart, Ryan Bellinger, David DeCredico, Gail Harje, Victoria Bec, Delysse Leonard, Rachael Vannatta, Terri Slack, Ezra Caspi, and Cara Escalona. Quorum was met upon completion of the roll call.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 9/12/2024 Meeting

Motion to approve from Barry Emens, second from Neil Blitz. Unanimously approved, with Steve Chisholm and Pam Zipse abstaining.

State Forester's Report

State Forester Todd Wyckoff announced that Barry Emens will be stepping down from council after 25 plus years of service. Mr. Wyckoff welcomed Taylor Sapudar, Municipal Arborist representing Princeton who will be joining the council starting January of 2025. Mr. Wyckoff welcomed Jalen Cabrera and Ezra Caspi, who have joined NJFS in outreach capacity. Mr. Wyckoff announced that the Green Communities grant is now live, with more than 40 applications begun. Mr. Wyckoff congratulated the NJ Shade Tree Federation for a wonderful conference and noted that 40 individuals were registered through the NJUCF IRA Leaf Out Grant funding. Mr. Wyckoff noted that Ryan Bellinger and Rachael Vannatta attended the national UCF coordinators meeting and Partners conference in Chicago, mid-November. Mr. Wyckoff announced that the LOG Education grants have been reannounced for the remaining eligible municipalities. Mr. Wyckoff announced that the program is in the early stages of working on new grant opportunities for municipalities. Mr. Wyckoff announced intent to purchase vehicles for the nursery from interest out of the UCF fund. Mr. Wyckoff congratulated Rachael Vannatta on completing the NJDEP EJ facilitator training program. Mr. Wyckoff mentioned that he was appointed to the NASF Urban & Community Forestry

committee. Mr. Wyckoff mentioned that NJFS is in the process of filling promotions for Regional Forester positions throughout the Bureau. Discussion ensued around grants and staffing.

Barry Emens thanked Mr. Wyckoff and noted that his time on council has been highlighted by the Treasure our Trees license plate.

Chairperson's Report

Mr. Brash thanked Barry Emens for his service to the Council over his time and welcomed Taylor to council. Mr. Brash noted the success of the NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference and the general enthusiasm of attendees at the conference. Mr. Brash announced the Society of Tree Expert's annual dinner meeting to take place on January 10th in Freehold. Mr. Brash mentioned the general interest of municipalities throughout the state in the Green Communities grant and renewing their CFMP's. Mr. Brash noted the importance of improvements at the State nursery and watering of trees planted in our urban areas.

New Business

Fiscal Report

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

Program Report

Brian McDonald provided the program report, also included in the packet. Largely unchanged from last meeting.

Legislative Issues

Terri Slack provided the legislative report, also included in the packer. Discussion ensued around the legislative report.

Subcommittee Reports

Ryan Bellinger noted that there was a CFMP reviewed in November and December, both of which required amendments.

CFMP Guidelines committee noted that there is no report. Dr. Grabosky noted that the mission statement of this committee should be examined for appropriate relevance. Discussion ensued around potential updates to CFMP Guidelines as new CFMPs come in and are evaluated, including an FAQ for issues around CFMP submission and process for CFMP approval.

Michael Hart discussed No Net Loss projects in Burlington and Salem Counties, included in packet. No comments were made from committee members. Discussion ensued on NNL project application requirements.

Council Business

Request was made for council committee members to join subcommittee participation.

Unfinished Business

None

Public Comment

Kristin Ace asked for ideas on how to support commissions statewide and recognition of volunteers and noted concerns around recognition of commissions. Discussion ensued around these topics.

Neal Blitz congratulated the NJ Shade Tree Federation on an exceptional conference, and remarked on the wonderful speakers involved.

Michael Martini pointed out the connections with Commissions' recognition with the standards from SFI's sustainability standards.

Amanda Diamond asked if anyone had a good example of tree ordinances and setting up payment/funds from tree removal. Discussion ensued.

Pam Zipse thanked everyone for attending the NJSTF 99th annual conference, and noted that the 100th anniversary conference will be October 16 & 17th 2025 in Atlantic City. The NJ Tree Foundation has developed a podcast, the first episode just launched, and distributed through their mailing list.