

The December bi-monthly meeting of the New Jersey Community Forestry Council (“Council”) was called to order by Chairman 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: William Brash, Mark Beamish, Carl Bowles, Steve Chisolm, Dr. Jason Grabosky, Dr. Melanie McDermott, Barry Emens, Kristin Ace, Pam Zipse, Vinh Lang, Lori Jenness, Joseph Greipp, Dr. Matthew Olson, Lisa Simms.

Excused: Neil Blitz

NJ Forest Service Present: State Forester Todd Wyckoff, Terri Slack, Rachael Vannatta, Patricia Shapella, Gail Harrje, Brian McDonald. Quorum was met upon completion of the roll call.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 9/14/2023 Meeting

Chairperson Brash called attention to the September meeting minutes. Barry Emens moved to approve, seconded by Pam Zipse. Vote to approve was unanimous with Steve Chisholm abstaining.

State Forester’s Report

State Forester Todd Wyckoff recognized Levon Bigelow’s leaving NJ Forest Service employment upon acceptance of a position in California. Mr. Wyckoff reviewed the council appointments, including those whose term is expiring and new appointments. Discussion ensued around the open council seats and what roles those are meant to represent.

Mr. Wyckoff thanked the NJ Shade Tree Federation for their wonderful conference in October. The program had 78 individuals attend Core training at this event. Mr. Wyckoff thanked Sustainable Jersey for hosting a panel discussion at the League of Municipalities meeting in November. Mr. Wyckoff thanked the NJ Tree Foundation for the opportunity to join a tree planting in Trenton. Mr. Wyckoff thanked the NJ ISA and Joe Greipp for the opportunity to attend the ISA workday in Trenton.

Mr. Wyckoff asked the council’s opinion on funding new green communities grants for new CFMP’s written under new guidelines. Discussion ensued surrounding the implementation of this new grant. The NJ Forest Service has been given permission to use a Forester Trainee position for future hiring. Mr. Wyckoff gave an update of the IRA grant, with an overview of the current status of the grant.

Chairperson’s Report

Mr. Brash thanked and congratulated the NJ Shade Tree Federation for their October conference, with some excellent and outstanding presentations. Mr. Brash passed along a presentation by Doug Tallamy, at Monmouth University for those interested. Mr. Brash congratulated Ms. Zipse on a radio interview around NJ Tree Foundation tree planting efforts. Discussion ensued around this and public relations efforts.

New Business:

Fiscal Report

Patricia Shapella reported on the fiscal state of the program, which was provided in the packet. Ms. Zipse asked how these numbers compare to a year ago, and Ms. Shapella stated that it would be hard to

compare due to a different system and accounting officers. Mr. Emens noted that the original Treasure our Trees license plates may be renewed soon, due to them fading. Discussion ensued surrounding advertising for these plates.

Program Report

Mr. McDonald provided the program report, also included in the packet. It was noted that program Annual Accomplishment Reports will be due Feb. 15 which is approaching soon.

Legislative Issues

Ms. Slack provided the legislative report, also included in the packet. Discussion ensued surrounding current legislation.

Subcommittee Reports:

Guidelines Subcommittee and Dr. Grabosky noted that the guidelines committee and council as a whole is ready to help with rollout.

No Net Loss report included in packet.

Unfinished Business:

Chairperson Brash brought up the time period for grants, application rates and survival period for tree planting. Discussion ensued around these topics.

New Business:

Council unanimously approved dates for 2024 meeting schedule.

Public Comment:

Dr. Grabosky announced that the SAF Accreditation committee will be visiting Rutgers in April.

Mr. Chisolm requested a guidelines presentation be given at the BTE annual meeting.

Ms. Zipse extended thanks on behalf of the NJ Tree Foundation for everyone's help and involvement in the Foundation's goals this year.