**Washington Township Green Team**

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting**

**Monday October 1st, 2018 6:30pm Minutes**

**Washington Township Municipal Building**

Members Present: Chairman Dan Ross, Paula Ross, Denise Spina-Belsky, and David Belsky

Members of the public: None.

Others Present: Township Committeeman: Gregg Forsbrey, Environmental Commissioner Merv Haines

Called to Order at: 6:35pm

1. **Guest Speaker Merv Haines- Chestnut Grove:** Merv educated the group about how the American Chestnut was once the predominant hardwood tree from the southern Atlantic through Maine until about 1904, when it was decimated by the chestnut blight.He explained that unlike its American counterpart, the Chinese Chestnut is not affected by the blight. Merv explained that through a process of genetic engineering called back-crossing The American Chestnut Foundation is working towards achieving trees that are 1/15th Chinese and 14/15th American. These trees would resemble the American chestnut in most physical characteristics while also harboring the genetic predisposition of being unaffected by blight. Merv explained that the chestnut grove here in Washington Township is a Cytoplasmic Male Sterility field, in which the male trees are partially or completely sterile and incapable of producing anthers or pollen. Merv mentioned that there are several Chinese and Japanese chestnut trees throughout the township, but no American trees that he was aware of. The group inquired where the Chinese and Japanese male trees that can be found throughout the township got here in the first place. Merv informed the group that they were mostly planted as ornamentals. Gregg asked what the blight was and Merv explained how it is an airborne pathogenic fungus that enters a trees xylem and eventually chokes it out. Merv explained that there are actually two groves nearby, one here in town, and another near Foxchase Road in Mendham, that they were both planted in 2004, and that some of the trees are still quite viable. Merv explained that he is currently looking for younger folks that are interested in carrying on his work, because he has been volunteering his time looking after the grove all this time, and would like to be able to pass the work on to the next generation. He told the group that he will be harvesting chestnuts over the weekend and was looking for help from any of the members of the green team that might be available. Denise, David, and Paula all expressed interest to help out.

1. **Old Business**:

**Green Festival:** Paula began the conversation by stating that she liked the set up better than in years past, and the foot traffic was good. The group all agreed that the weather left much to be desired but hopefully it will be better next year. Gregg said that for next year we need to return to the format of having assigned lot spaces as we had done in the past due to some issues we had this year. The assigned spaces will be pre-determined at the Green Team’s discretion. Gregg also suggested allowing only one car per vendor for next year. Dan expressed his desire to be more clear about holding every group to meeting the requirements for registration. Going into further detail, he explained that many groups registered under different names, or registered more than once, and it made for difficult record keeping. It was decided that there would be improved access to the shared documentation or some other method employed for next year to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Paula thought for next year we should once again try to make the event “greener.” Dan thought maybe we could add composting bins to the garbage and recycling options, or maybe invite an organization like Ag Choice next year to oversee the composting of food waste?

**Harrington Fields Pollinator Meadow**- Dan mentioned the need to start collecting native seeds for the fall seeding at the meadow, and the interest in gathering more pollinator plants. Paula stated that she thought that we should just wait to install the benches until perhaps next year when the trail is being worked on and the meadow has grown in more. The group discussed postponing the official dedication until the meadow was more established as well, and a potential mowing schedule was also discussed.

1. **New Business:**

**Market at Long Valley-** Dan explained to the group how he had ordered the new parking signs for next year’s Market and that the Green Team event here signs has also been ordered.Dan mentioned that there are only two more markets left, and that the new signs could be used for the final few weeks and then for next year. Dan mentioned that he would like to order Market T-Shirts for next year, and a discussion ensued regarding whether these shirts would be just for the Market Committee members, for the vendors, or for sale to patrons as a means of fundraising? If the later route was taken, it could be a means of free advertising. Gregg said that we could likely buy the shirts at a bulk price, and provided the group with the name of a company the township has used in the past. The group discussed how we might get a volunteer to help run the market next year, and how we might possibly pay them. Thank you gifts for the vendors were briefly discussed again the idea of Market T-shirts was a thought. Gregg suggested Morton’s Marketing Resources as a vendor for the shirts. Dan mentioned a few additional places he would like to advertise for next year; Edible Jersey, the patch, and the County development brochure. Dan brought up the fact that the committee would need to reach out to sponsors early on next year as well. Gregg suggested that we should put together a solicitation packet for prospective sponsors and have that ready to go for next year.

**Updates** **to the mission statement/ position nominations:** Dan read the current mission statement to the group, and new options were weighed and discussed. The topic will be brought up again when more members are present and can weigh in, then a vote will be taken at a future meeting. Dan also proposed nominating Paula for treasurer. Denise nominated Paula, and David seconded.

**Partnering with Schools**: Nothing new to discuss.

**Fundraising/ New Grants:** Nothing new to report or discuss.

**Outreach:**  David mentioned we could possibly incorporate scan-able QR codes into our handouts, signage and brochures in the future. The group decided to look into it further. Dan mentioned that the brochures at the meadow have been moving so we are clearly still generating interest in the project.

**Open Discussion:** Paula informed the group of the upcomingClean Communities dates and the group decided Sunday Oct. 14th at 9:00am. The clean-up will be taking place along the roadside of Schooley’s Mtn. Rd near Cataract Park. Paula offered to reach out to the DPW and let them know about when we will be cleaning up and which stretch of road. The group decided that we would all wear our Green Team shirts, and hopefully would have our event here today signs by then. Paula mentioned that Mark K. would also like to join us the day of and she offered to reach out to him with the new date and time. Dan also brought up that the fall paper shredding was the same weekend, and inquired if anyone was planning on attending.

Paula mentioned that the art teacher she partners with will once again be collecting items for her classroom. She will be collecting toilet paper and paper towel rolls, Styrofoam, odd shaped containers, small toys like legos, matchbox tops, detergent caps, and spools from thread, all for her builders class. Paula mentioned wanting to revisit the buy local program, and see if we could incorporate it into the Green Business Recognition Program.

**Call to adjourn:** 8:29pm