

Demarest Environmental Commission Reorganization Agenda
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
7:30 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, David Lerner and Noelle Tutunjian. Zoning Board Officer Michael Greco was also present, and he guided David and members in leading the meeting. Absent committee members: Angela Rodin and Ted Alevrontas

Rajiv had to leave early, before the meeting was adjourned, but the committee still had a quorum and continued the meeting.

III. Election of Officers

Motion was made and approved to name David Lerner as 2026 Environmental Commission Chair.
Vote: 4 aye, 0 nay

It was decided that the committee members would rotate taking minutes. Noelle Tutunjian volunteered to take minutes of the reorganization meeting.

IV. Approve 2026 Meeting Dates

There was discussion about moving the days and times of the monthly meeting, as well as discussion about meeting in July and August. In recent history, the Environmental Commission has not met during the summer, but the committee members decided to keep July and August meetings on the official calendar for now both to prevent loss of momentum and to wait and see if committee member vacation plans interfere.

Motion was made and approved to set meeting dates at the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm, with the exception of December, which will be the second Tuesday due to holidays. Vote: 4 aye, 0 nay

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Tuesday, January 20, 2026 | 7. Tuesday, July 28, 2026 |
| 2. Tuesday, February 24, 2026 | 8. Tuesday, August 25, 2026 |
| 3. Tuesday, March 24, 2026 | 9. Tuesday, September 22, 2026 |
| 4. Tuesday, April 28, 2026 | 10. Tuesday, October 27, 2026 |
| 5. Tuesday, May 26, 2026 | 11. Tuesday, November 24, 2026 |
| 6. Tuesday, June 23, 2026 | 12. Tuesday, December 15, 2026 |

V. Old Business.

- a. The members discussed Demarest Honeybees and Hummingbirds, a former initiative of the EC. James Chang shared that it was in place for 1-2 years, but a neighbor/resident was worried about the bees on his property, and ultimately it was removed. The members decided not to revive this initiative at the moment.

- b. There were outstanding questions about another old business item: native tree recommendations, focus invasive species. Rajiv Krishnamurthy recalled that former mayor Ray Cywinski is an expert in native trees species and knows which species are best to plant and which species are invasive and should be removed. Rajiv volunteered to speak with Ray and former EC Chair Jessica to get more clarity on this old business item.

VI. New Business

David Lerner initiated a brainstorming session for members to raise ideas for new EC projects in 2026.

- a. (Rajiv) Questioning the EC mission statement
- b. Discussion of previous research on artificial turf and idea of producing position statement
- c. (Noelle) Goal of doubling the number of composting households from 25 to 50.
- d. (David) Goal of developing a social media presence
- e. (David) Goal of increasing Demarest community engagement. Idea of engaging an NVD high school “liaison”. Michael informed the committee about utilizing the Demarest high school town hall volunteers in Spring/Summer
- f. (David) Re-engaging with the Northern Valley Greenway project
- g. Goal of increasing connectivity among Norther Valley EC’s. Idea of reconnecting with the EC’s previously involved Earth Fair. James was very involved in the two Earth Fairs (pre-covid) and volunteered to re-engage with that community
- h. Discussion about the pros and cons of participating in Sustainable New Jersey. Pros being compendium of initiatives and potential for grant money. Negatives being the painstaking point system with a lot of work for little reward. Most grants are \$2K.
- i. (James) Continue community garbage clean-ups
- j. (Noelle) Goal of learning about regional community solar initiatives and how EC can engage with other towns around this.
- k. (Noelle) Idea of EC weighing in on development issues in town, specifically when development plans are environmentally unsound. Michael explained that the Planning Board requests input from all commissions, including the EC, but not for residential zoning variances.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting,