

MINUTES TENAFLY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

February 19, 2026

In person meeting, Borough Hall.

Attendance: Olga Milanos (chair), Eve Bolkin, Alison Chertoff, Anna Makrinos, Julie O’Connor (Council), Pat Mason (DPW), John Purdy, Nina Seiden, Zina Spezakis, and Jon Warms (Planning Board); Ben Kushan (HS liaison); and the following guests: Mark Ippolito (DPW, foreman of Shade Tree Division), and Sue Truesdell (Green Team); Alex Brahstein (Tenafly Nature Center – representing Deb Davidson), Andrew Mikesh (Tenafly Nature Center), and Jack Altman and Emily Dayton (HS Green Team members)

[The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.]

Statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

The minutes of January 15, 2026 were accepted. Eve Bolkin to send to Omar Stovall.

**DPW Update (Pat Mason)**

The EC expressed the town’s gratitude to the DPW for the massive winter storm clean-up effort about 2 weeks ago. Tenafly’s clean-up was far superior to surrounding towns.

Pat explained the enormous effort the team made and accepted the thanks on behalf of the DPW. He warned that, as a result of the last storm, we are running low on salt. They are preparing for the next storm, expected February 22.

Compost – DPW has installed a new compost bin, and lock, to replace the broken bin located at the Recycling Center. Olga reported on a communication from Dorothy Quincy (a former Tenafly resident who had spearheaded Tenafly’s food composting program). Dorothy noted that the state law impacts county-wide food reduction goals. One of the methods being considered is to require towns to adopt food composting programs. The EC will follow this development.

Recycling – January 26 costs per ton were the same as December. The totals for January are as follows. (For comparison and easy reference, restating December’s numbers, which are also in the January 15, 2026 minutes.)

	December	January
Comingled	Paid \$75/ton (48.17 tons = \$3,612.75)	Paid \$75/ton (54.16 tons = \$4,062)
Mixed Paper	Received \$11/ton (102.03 tons = \$1,122.33)	Received \$11/ton (81.31 tons = \$894.41)
Cardboard	Received \$20/ton (3.7 tons = \$74)	Received \$20/ton (5.77 tons = \$115.40)
Net: Town paid \$2,416.42		Net: Town paid \$3,052.19

As noted previously, while comingled costs the town money, this is still cheaper than the cost per ton for garbage collection.

Trees –See Schedule I for the information on trees removed and planted in town, updated from the December 4 minutes.

Davis Johnson Park – The Green Team expressed their gratitude to the DPW for fixing a flood at the greenhouse. A pipe there had burst and everything had frozen, with only one plant surviving.

### Leaf Composting -

As noted at the last EC meeting, the cost of leaf composting has more than doubled and the DPW is exploring various options, including potentially establishing a new compost facility at the site of the prior location combined with a compactor to hold more volume. As previously noted, any facility would require ongoing compliance with numerous regulations. Pat is meeting with the NJ DEP to get a sense of whether the agency would approve certain of the options being considered by Tenafly.

### **Council Update (Julie O'Connor)**

#### Tree Trust

As a reminder, the ordinance is being updated to permit forfeited tree mitigation money (and not just donations) to be placed in the Tree Trust. Julie worked with Mark Ippolito to review the tree ordinance being proposed to provide feedback to the Council. They have suggested certain changes to strengthen the tree code.

#### Trash-a-Thon

Deb Davidson has submitted the clean-up application to the county to obtain the tongs for the Trash-a-Thon. Pat told Julie that the county can email him with the information so that someone from the DPW will pick up the tongs on the day of the T-a-T.

There was some confusion about the T-a-T dates. Eve will follow up with Deb Davidson. [Update: the date is April 19, as already reported in the town newsletter. April 26 is the rain date.]

### **Planning Board Update (Jon Warms):**

- At the February meeting, the Board approved amendments to the master plan to permit overlay areas to increase density in the downtown. This is related to the fair housing plan compliance.
- Knickerbocker Country Club will be applying to the Planning Board soon to request permission for pickle board courts and some other improvements.

### **Tenafly Nature Center (Alex Brahnstein on behalf of Deb Davidson)**

The TNC's annual boundary walk is March 8. Upcoming events are the annual Trash-a-Thon, Nature Day (June 14), and Fireflies and Faeries (July 25). They are planning a gala for mid-May.

TNC will be hosting educational programs to explain what plants may replace invasive species. On March 16, they will also be hosting an informational session about Beech Leaf disease.

Andrew Mikesh, a Trustee of the Nature Center, presented Julie with a plant in appreciation of her role previously serving as the Tenafly Council liaison. (The new liaison as of January is Jamie Corsair.)

### **Arbor Day (Anna Makrinos)**

The annual tree planting will occur at the Middle School this year. A date is not yet selected.

### **Miscellaneous (Olga Milanos)**

Olga reported that a Tenafly resident had written to express their concern about the loss of many trees on Engle Street as a result of a development. Olga will reach out to the resident to express the EC's support for a stronger tree code, while explaining that there are limited options available to the town to protect trees on private property.

**High School Green Team (Jack Altman and Emily Dayton; Ben Kushman)**

The Green Team is collecting plastic bottle caps and will create an art project using these caps, working in partnership with the HS art classes. The High School, Middle School, and 2 elementary schools are now participating. They are continuing discussions with the remaining 2 other elementary schools. They are hoping the town will participate as well. They may reach out to Julie for help in obtaining permissions to place cap collection bins in municipal sites. They can also provide her with information so that this may be included in the Mayor's weekly call.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm. Next meeting is March19 at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eve Bolkin

Schedule 1

Trees Removed & Planted 2026 (as of February 18, 2026)

Trees Removed with Permits:	49
Major Trees Required with Mitigation	7
Minor Trees Required with Mitigation	0
Major Trees Planted	31
Minor Trees Planted	53

Trees Removed & Planted 2025 (updated from December 4)

Trees Removed with Permits:	<del>741</del> 771
Major Trees Required with Mitigation	<del>717</del> 408
Minor Trees Required with Mitigation	125
Major Trees Planted	<del>204</del> 450
Minor Trees Planted	<del>686</del> 1218

Trees Removed & Planted 2024

Borough Trees Removed by DPW	69
Borough Trees Planted by DPW	70
Trees Removed with Permits:	588
Major Trees Required with Mitigation	714
Minor Trees Required with Mitigation	108
Major Trees Planted	104
Minor Trees Planted	802

Trees Removed & Planted 2023

Borough Trees Removed by DPW	73
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Borough Trees Planted by DPW	23
Trees Removed with Permits:	671
Major Trees Required with Mitigation	707
Minor Trees Required with Mitigation	66
Major Trees Planted	648
Minor Trees Planted	204

Trees Removed & Planted 2022

Borough Trees Removed by DPW	42
Borough Trees Planted by DPW	50
Trees Removed with Permits:	795
Trees Required with Mitigation	775
Trees Planted	523

Trees Removed & Planted 2021

Borough Trees Removed by DPW	75
Borough Trees Planted by DPW	0
Trees Removed with Permits:	655
Trees Required with Mitigation	1014
Trees Planted	382

Trees Removed & Planted 2020

Borough Trees Removed by DPW	66
Borough Trees Planted by DPW	80
Trees Removed with Permits:	651
Trees Required with Mitigation	683

Trees Planted

479