

## **Morristown Shade Tree Commission (STC24) Meeting Minutes Monthly Meeting**

May 27, 2014

7:00 pm meeting, Room 201

Morristown Town Hall

### **Members present:**

Tina Wahlstrom, Chair

Chantal Diedrich, Secretary

Karl Roettger

Anne Bertucci

Joe Torres

Kristin Ace

Michael Rockland

Louise Witt

### **Members absent:**

**Guests:** Richard Wolowicz, Heidi & Peter Schwab-homeowners and Kathleen Rogers-VanLeeuwen-ReMax (16 Perry St.)

1. **Roll call**
2. **Minutes:** None to submit.
3. **Statement of Compliance with NJ Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law)** made by Tina at 7:00.
4. **Recent tree requests/issues:**
5. **16 Perry Street:** Louise followed up with James Campbell from the town zoning office, to check about the variance for a new driveway at 16 Perry St. He said that they did not need one because there are no setback laws, and no coverage problems. Two members had wanted to view the property after the last meeting, and they have. Also, a neighbor gave concerns about the closeness of the driveway to her house. Tina wanted clarification from Rich about the structural integrity of the tree that has hollowness at its base. The linden tree was able to have a 12" probe inserted at its base- so almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the tree is compromised. The base of a tree is constantly touching moisture, and cannot compartmentalize the wound to protect itself. Heidi Schwab agreed again to replace the tree with another. Louise is concerned about setting a precedence for considering cutting down trees for just 30% decay. Heidi feels that the need for a driveway is a quality of life issue for them. Tina motioned (Chantal seconded the motion) for a vote for removal of the healthy linden (Macculloch Ave. side of property). All voted not to remove it. Tina motioned (Chantal seconded the motion) to call for a vote for

- removal of the compromised linden (Maple Ave. side of the property), to put in a driveway. Vote: Chantal yes, Louise no, Michael no, Karl yes, Tina yes, Kristin yes. Tina will contact James Campbell saying tree removal is contingent on a driveway being put in. She reminded homeowners that the town would remove the tree.
6. **Emerald Ash borer:** Rich reported that it has made its way into NJ. What does that mean for us? Over 5 years a female ash borer can lay 69,000 eggs. It creates death for the tree, then moves on to another tree. There is protection- a treatment that goes into the vascular portion of the tree by pressurized injections or treating around the roots. The tree can be treated 21 times (years) if the tree hasn't lost 30% of its leaves yet. Rich feels we should look at historic ash trees to treat first. We need our tree inventory completed so we know where the ash trees are. Tina and Joe feel that we should help get the word out to people, and let them know what to do. Should it go out on the Mayor's newsletter? **ACTION:** Tina will craft an ash borer bulletin and ask Michael Rogers to send it through town's distribution channels, and Kristin will contact Kevin at Morristown Green to see if he will post an article that she will write.
  7. **Vail Mansion:** Michael Rogers said that the town couldn't take care of the trees on the Vail Mansion front property. **ACTION:** Rich will contact Maryanne Connelly at the Vail Mansion and let her know.
  8. **Corea Park:** Rodney Frelinghuysen's office got back to the STC about Corea Park-which is right next to the post office near the Green. Mr. Corea was a postmaster of Morristown. It is town property, and we can plant it. **ACTION:** Tina will inform the town that Morristown owns Corea Park.
  9. **Tracy Park:** Tina spoke with Mrs. Tracy and she said that she doesn't care if the trees planted at Tracy Park are dogwoods or not, just that we have trees that thrive. The STC feels that dogwoods aren't a good choice for the park. **ACTION:** Tina will contact Kathleen Margiotti and find out how much was donated by Mrs. Tracy's grandsons for a tree.
  10. **Dead trees on Park Place:** 3 large pear trees have died on Park Place, in front of the Iron Bar. We don't know why they died. **ACTION:** Rich will take a soil sample to rule out salt or other chemicals.
  11. **Washington Street streetscape project:** Morristown received a grant to do sidewalk renovation on Washington Street, just after we planted trees there. We will have to watch and get a sidewalk schedule when construction occurs.
  12. **Speedwell Ave.** Two new trees (planted last fall) on Speedwell died this winter. Contractor is replacing them. **ACTION:** Rich is contacting contractor with official addresses for replacement trees.

13. **Mayor and STC:** Tina had a discussion with the Mayor on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Tim Dougherty said that he heard that the STC delayed the vote for the 16 Perry Street driveway, and that we were rude to homeowner Heidi Schwab. He wanted to know why two members didn't bother to visit site beforehand. Tina explained that we had one member that had zoning questions, and two members that wanted to see the tree. Tina voiced that she did not believe that we were rude, or that we were untimely in our vote because of the issues that came up. It was only a two-week delay which is not long. Vij and the mayor will give us timeline protocol for voting. Mayor felt that Tina should do a better job controlling the STC. Kristin was upset that the Vij won't meet us about Morris County trees, but he calls about a driveway issue. Feels like a conflict of interest because of who the realtor is that is selling the house. The Mayor would like to meet with Vij, Tina, and one member of the STC. The meeting is scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>, Thursday evening at 7pm. Tina, Louise and Kristin will attend the meeting, and debrief us at next meeting.
14. **Spring planting:** Landscapers Ascape worked 2 days last week. At 121 Washington Street the dentist didn't want a tree. It just happened that a tree couldn't be placed there for other reasons. A few others didn't want trees, but they went in anyway. Rich felt the contractors did good work, and the project went well. George's Island got 2 trees-one extra besides the large elm. Mr. Fleisher at Suzi's said he did not want a tree, and that no one had asked him. Tina called him and explained that we are just refilling tree wells. She invited him to the STC meeting to voice his opinions.
15. **Meeting frequency:** Vote to meet every 2 weeks for the next two months. All agreed.
16. **Hillcrest Ave.** Open space: There are some concerns about trees at this newly created open space, and Louise volunteered Rich to go give an assessment. Town wants it to be a Park of sorts. **ACTION:** Rich will go visit the site.
17. **Protocols:** Kristin wants to establish protocols and ordinances (before Christmas). Our meetings are taken over by tree issues and requests. She feels that the STC needs to establish one protocol per meeting. What about a sub-committee? More discussion and ideas later.
18. **JCP&L:** Rich heard that Asplund will also be in town trimming trees for JCP&L also. **ACTION:** Rich will be in contact with them on Friday.
19. Meeting Adjourned at 8:40.