

Morristown Shade Tree Commission

Annual Report 2013

The establishing ordinance was passed by the Council in February 2013. Seven voting members and two alternates were appointed by the Mayor:

Kristin Ace

Ann Bertucci-alternate

Chantal Diedrich

Silvia LeBlanc

Michael Rockland

Karl Roettger

Joe Torres-alternate

Tina Wahlstrom

Louise Witt

The first meeting was held on April 16, 2013. At that meeting Tina Wahlstrom was elected President/Chairperson and Chantal Dietrich was elected Secretary. A quorum was determined (4) for the Shade Tree Commission (STC). In addition, a routine meeting date, time and place were established and made public on the Town website along with a description of the purpose of the Shade Tree Commission (STC) and its members. Since the first meeting agendas have been posted prior to each meeting and minutes have been posted after approval by the STC.

The STC established priorities for the first year which were to 1) establish a process with DPW for managing the Morristown municipal community forest (Town trees), 2) meet requirements for Approved Status with the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, 3) assess the status of the previous tree inventory and ensure its accuracy, 4) plan a significant tree planting to fill empty tree wells in the central business district, 5) facilitate the hiring of an arborist.

Fourteen meetings of the STC were held between April 16 and December 10, 2013.

Accomplishments:

- 1) A process for managing the Town trees has been established and agreed on by the Town Administrator, Town Engineer, arborist and the STC. This process facilitates tracking of resident requests/complaints and DPW/STC observations (e.g. pruning and removal) of Town trees and ensures follow up for issue resolution with residents. In addition, a process was developed and implemented to address ongoing sidewalk repair projects to ensure minimal damage to street trees.

- 2) As of December 31, 2013 the STC is on track for meeting the requirements to obtain Approved Status by end of February 2014. The Accomplishment Report has been written and will be approved during the first STC meeting of the new year. It is due to the NJ Forestry Program in February 2014. All other requirements have been completed, which included obtaining CORE training for at least one Town employee and a minimum of 8 Continuing Education Units.
- 3) A random sample of trees has been inventoried and compared to the previous tree inventory. A report of the analysis has been prepared by The Land Conservancy and submitted to the Town Administrator and STC.
- 4) A tree planting plan has been developed and is in process for the Spring 2014. The first phase will include planting in open tree wells along Morris Street, South Street, Speedwell Avenue and Washington Streets. A second phase will include replacing trees that were damaged, destroyed or removed as a result of recent storms in other areas of Town. In preparation, soil samples of wells where previous trees have died have been submitted to Rutgers for analysis. The results of the analysis will be used to remediate any unfavorable conditions. Tree well and tree maintenance specification have been reviewed and updated as necessary to create the best environment possible to help establish newly planted trees. In addition, the Town arborist supervised the recent tree plantings that were part of the Morristown Partnership/Town streetscape project.
- 5) A Town arborist was hired during the Fall 2013. The STC developed a Scope of Work and suggested credentials for incorporation into the RFP and provided recommendations based on the proposals submitted for the RFP to the Town Administrator.
- 6) A site plan review was completed for the construction project at 94 Washington Avenue. Recommendations addressing the management of the four Town trees adjacent to the property were provided to the Mayor, Town Administrator, developer and Town Construction Official.
- 7) An Arbor Day Proclamation was made by the Mayor designating an official Arbor Day in Morristown for 2013.
- 8) A budget was submitted to the Town Administrator for 2014 to include \$100 for membership in the NJ Shade Tree Federation, \$900 for continuing education and training, \$1,000 for Arbor Day and \$500 for public relations and awareness campaign.

Sylvia Geisler LeBlanc submitted her resignation in the late summer. This has resulted in an opening on the STC. Requests have been made to fill this position by appointing Kristin Ace to the remainder of the five year term vacated by Sylvia.

Tina Wahlstrom

Chair, Morristown Shade Tree Commission

December 31, 2013