

Minutes for Shade Tree Commission meeting on 7/9/2013

7-8:45 pm meeting, Room 201

Roll Call:

Tina Wahlstrom, Chair

Michael Rockland

Karl Roettger

Kristin Ace

Ann Bertucci,

Joe Torres

Absent: Chantal Diedrich, Louise Witt, Silvia LeBlanc

I. Statement of Compliance with NJ Open Public Meetings Act

At 7:00pm Tina Wahlstrom opened the meeting and the statement of compliance was made.

II. Minutes

Tina made a motion to approve the STC meeting minutes from 6/11/2013. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

III *arborist ~

Tina: Michael Rogers will incorporate our ideas into an rfp and give them back to us for one more review before sending it out

*interim arborist ~

Tina: DPW and the STC are now working with Rich Wolowicz until the arborist position is filled through the RFP process

*process for tree work is as follows~

Tina:

- request comes in to STC
- goes on spreadsheet
- STC discusses at next meeting

- the spreadsheet goes back to the arborist and Jeff Hartke with our recommendations
- Jeff creates a P.O. (purchase order) for any work required of the arborist, once the PO is approved the arborist will make field assessments based on the spreadsheet and respond back to Jeff and the STC
- the STC will follow up with residents about their requests regarding tree issues they have presented.
- DPW executes the recommendations (managed by Jeff)

Anne: wanted to know the length of time for this whole process to take place and Tina sited an example of the work getting done in two days once it is approved, but it is ultimately up to DPW. The arborist will get the spreadsheet monthly.

Tina: Kristen Wedderburn set up a town email account for the Shade Tree Commission months ago. Every attempt to access the address remotely has failed. We really need this email account to be functional because we want residents to send their requests there.

ACTION: Joe will find out when the town IT contractor is available and reach out to him about this issue.

IV *tree inventory status~

Tina: Michael Rogers needs a bit more time to review the proposals and to meet with the town attorney regarding the required approval process. .

V. Planning Board/Board of Adjustments

Karl: nothing new to report from the Planning Board. Met with a member of the Morristown Partnership to let them know about the STC. Apparently The Partnership has some streetscape plans that may impact town trees.

Tina: there is a Board of Adjustment application spreadsheet that could be made available to us. Would that be useful to Karl?

Karl: I don't need to receive it at this time.

ACTION: Karl will reach out to Board of Adjustments to introduce himself again

Tina: Mercedes Benz took out trees to plant a shrub sign (logo) on their front lawn within the past couple of years. The corner of Ridgedale and Lafayette is now sun drenched ~ do they need to replant trees? Were the trees part of their original approved plan?

ACTION: Karl will investigate this issue

Karl: There are 5 dead Maples along Speedwell.

Group discussion: recommendation to have the arborist check the 5 dead Maples on Speedwell to determine why they died. Add these trees to the spreadsheet.

VI. spreadsheet of requests and issues regarding specific community trees

Tina: a meeting took place with Tina, Louise, Jeff Hartke, Rich Ferricola and Rich Wolowicz (arborist) on July 5. All items on the spreadsheet were reviewed. The arborist assessed trees from the spreadsheet and responded back with his recommendations. That spreadsheet was distributed to the STC prior to tonight's meeting.

Karl: brought up the question on how and what to add to the spreadsheet in terms of tree issues we may discover on our walks around town.

Tina: STC members can add items to the spreadsheet. For now it should be limited to potential hazards like dead wood, dead trees, and obstructions. Send your observations to Tina.

ACTION: Karl is going to email his notes to Tina for placement on the spreadsheet.

Discussion of the spreadsheet information ensued. Tina brought us up to date with the status of each entry based on the arborist's input.

Tina: On July 5 while reviewing the pruning of the Pear on the Elm St Island with Jeff, Rich and the arborist, we were informed of a plan to remove the dirt from the island so that richer soil could be added for the proposed garden. A discussion about the impact to the tree ensued and it was agreed that the soil should not be removed around the roots of the Pear. Removing the soil could damage the tree.

ACTION: Kristin to reach out to Kathleen Margiotta conveying the message from the STC and arborist that no soil can be removed for their garden planting so as to not stress or damage the tree in the center of the island.

Tina: At the July 5 meeting the arborist recommended that the DPW perform a "finish cut" on all the trees on Washington Ave for which poor pruning technique has been used and documented. Jeff and Rich agreed.

ACTION: Tina will request a completion date from Jeff Hartke

Anne: wanted to know about the yellow plastic ribbon on trees on Washington Avenue. Tina explained that they have been targeted by DPW for pruning. They were on the spreadsheet for the arborist who has recommended light pruning (thinning) and elevation.

General discussion regarding the STC's concerns about current pruning practices. Based on observations by various STC members, and input from the arborist, the STC feels that the DPW Tree Crew and the community forest would benefit from continuing education on best pruning practices for the DPW. Pruning should improve the stability and health of the community trees, and protect public safety and not be harmful to either. A possible solution would be to have the arborist work in the field with them for a period of time.

VI. special topics

We discussed the Mayors reaction to the letter about the towns pruning practices.

Anne: recommends that the interim arborist use the itreeGPS system while working with the tree men to get them comfortable with its usage.

Joe: brought up the need for our own page on the towns website.

Joe: raised the need to talk about lights on public trees ~ deferred to a later date.

VII. Fall Planting

General discussion about what we want to accomplish with the fall planting. Because we will not have a completed inventory in time to make evidence based decisions before the fall, and because it would be irresponsible to utilize taxpayer money to plant a large number of trees without first knowing what species are thriving in town (and which are not) we will recommend a very limited planting in the fall.

We decided the scope of the planting will be limited to highly visible area of town where people walk and gather, and where there are open tree wells. We will use advice from the current arborist to select appropriate tree species.

Anne made a motion that our scope include the streets below and Kristin seconded it. It was unanimously approved.

ACTION: each person is assigned a section to find out how many tree wells are empty or have dead trees to be filled on the streets below for the fall planting.

*South Street ~ Karl

*Park Place ~ Karl

*Speedwell ~ Karl

*Morris Street ~ Tina

*Washington Street ~ Joe

ACTION: assigned individuals to report back on the number of open tree wells and dead trees. The target date for all information to be gathered is 7.16.2013.

Tina: Washington Street is a county road. The County has a STC so we may have to make recommendations to them rather than the DPW.

This list will be sent to the arborist and to Jeff.

VIII. Other business

Tina: a property on Washington Ave has sold. There is a proposed demolition and rebuild that includes the removal of a town tree. The STC can send a reminder to the contractor that no town trees can be harmed or removed without explicit approval from the STC.

We all voted to approve the letter written to the developer of 94 Washington Street.
ACTION: Tina to write the letter and send it to STC for comment, then send it to the contractor.

Tina has asked us to send her any agenda items we would like discussed and she will get them posted.

ACTION: Kristin to amend letter to the public about STC when the new information is available (ie how many, where and what trees will be planted in the fall and our email address for requests)

8:45 meeting adjourned