

FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION
Meeting on January 11, 2023, 7:30 PM
1st Floor Mayor's Conference Room 110

MINUTES

- 1. Meeting Called to Order – 7:32 p.m.**
In attendance: Bill Brash, Kurt Davis, Mark Taylor, Stacey Ehling, Thom Ritchie via phone.
Guests: Greg Hanley, Josh Gold
- 2. Salute to the Flag - completed**
- 3. Announcement of Open Public Meeting Act - completed**
In accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, (c231, P.L. 1975) this meeting was announced by posting a notice on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building reserved for that purpose, by mailing such notice to the offices of the official newspapers and the Township and filing such notice with the Township Clerk.
- 4. Oath of Office – completed.** Mayor Alan Walker gave oath to Kurt Davis who completed it to continue to serve as a member of the Shade Tree Commissioner. He was reappointed for a 5-year-term.
- 5. Election of Officers:** (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary for 2023) - completed
Mayor Alan Walker asked for nominations for the open offices:
Nomination: Thom Ritchie as Chairman, Bill first, Stacey second.
Nomination: Bill Brash as Vice Chair, Mark first, Kurt second.
Nomination: Stacey Ehling as Secretary, Bill first, Kurt Second.
All approved unanimously.
- 6. Meeting Minutes of November 2, 2022 – completed.** Bill first, Kurt second, approved as written unanimously.
- 7. Shade Tree Appeal Hearings**
 - a.** Josh Gold (181 Robertsville Road) - Tree removal for solar system. Second visit to the committee to discuss the report from the tree expert.
 - Members reviewed the report, had a few issues with it, in part because all 32 trees were either listed as dead or sick or dying. The committee viewed a Google map from June of 2022 which showed that the entire yard was full of green trees, contradicting the report which showed only a few months later that all the trees were dead or dying. One reason given was Oak Wilt, which the board explained has never been found in NJ and the only way to diagnose it is to have it done at Rutgers (or another) plant diagnostic lab. The disease was likened to finding COVID – that it would be very serious if it was found in NJ. Also noted that Bacterial Leaf Scorch can't be diagnosed in winter, need to see trees in bloom. Board noted there was no method for determination of tree health included in the report, no photos, and canopies are not drawn to scale. 1" = 30ft.
 - The Commissioners said they wanted to inspect the trees themselves before making any other determinations.

- Mr. Gold will reach out to the tree expert and try to have him there for the inspection
- Slated to go and review the trees. Commission noted that they want to take good care of our residents and serve the community and want to be able to give Mr. Gold our best opinion not make it harder than it needs to be.

b. James Cocito (160 Sheffield Drive) – He did not attend the meeting.

8. Unfinished Business:

- a.** Fall 2023 tree planting for street tree replacements (residents request list & Stillwells Corner Road) and DPMA. Commission decided to do a Fall planting, not spring. Will give residents until April 1 as the deadline to apply for replacement trees for the Fall planting.
- b.** Prune trees along Stillwells Corner Road – No updates – minor pruning needs to be done and want to see if we can coordinate that with brush clean-up. Some need elevations, co-dominant leads pruned back. Bill will speak with Scott about this. If not will look at hiring a contractor.
- c.** Greg Hanley – Brought the plans to share regarding the solar field information for - -
 - Applewood Estates on Gully Road. Greg walked site in the fall, large black locust, red maple 14-17 inch trees, Amur Cork tree. There were some trees removed where the smaller retention basin is. Switching station will put replacement trees there. They will meet with township engineers put buffering to any tree removal outside the solar array.
 - Harding Road project – there are two more apartment buildings. They are listening to suggestions. A large oak will have protection against soil compaction – there is a demolition plan to provide protection, landscape plans for deer protection, are using suggested tree and shrubs, natural mulch. On Colts Neck Rd/Harding Avenue– not orange plastic fencing – open mesh deer guards.
 - Centrastate Hospital – To join the two properties, had to take out a Honey Locust, but will replace that tree and will add one extra. Planted Amur Maples, 2 - 4” caliper. Have to sign off project before bond will be released.
 - Four Season on Rt. 9 South removed 5 Purple Plums and Downy Shadblows from plan will replace with 8-10 foot White Pines to serve as a buffer.

9. New Business:

- a.** Shade Tree Monthly Report – reviewed – Discussed the approval to remove trees at 60 Heritage Drive – Trees 2 and 3 on the diagram are large street trees and probably should not have been allowed as part of the removal since. The Commission will need to view them see if they are still there and try to prevent them from being removed. Ordinance says they are street trees – and unless they are dead/dangerous should not be removed.
- b.** CFMP Accomplishment Report due February 15, 2023 and paperwork for Tree City USA- this was already submitted.
- d.** Financial report of Shade Tree accounts – was not in the packet, need next month.
- e.** Correspondence - none
- f.** Arbor Day April 28, & April 29, 2023 – West Freehold School - Stacey will reach out to see if they are willing to participate. May have to juggle days to most of Commission being unavailable that week. May need help from DPW to dig the hole and plant the tree.
- g.** Publication of 2023 Meeting Dates and times – Motion to approve calendar as listed, Mark first, Kurt second, motion approved.
- h.** DPMA Irrigation repairs and other needed maintenance and improvements. Durand Park – It was reported that there is a list of items that are being done many of which were recommend by the Commission: irrigation repairs completed, dead trees will be removed after leaf collection, maintenance plan discussed for winter projects, plan for early start bi-weekly

maintenance crews, path/mulch/mowing all prioritized every other week and DPW and Parks working there together.

10. Open Public Discussion - none

11. Good and Welfare

- a. NJNLA, Total Pro Expo, January 31, & February 1, 2023, Edison, NJ
- b. NJLCA, Landscape New Jersey Trade Show. March 1, 2023, Meadowlands, NJ
- c. NJAISA, Work Day, January 14, CANCELLED 2023, Branch Brook Park, Newark, NJ
- d. Garden State Tree Conference, March 2 & 3, Tropicana, Atlantic City, NJ

12. Adjourn – 9:13 p.m.

Minutes by Stacey Ehling.