

Freehold Township Shade Tree Commission
Minutes February 2, 2022

1. Meeting Called to Order: 7:32

In attendance: Thom Ritchie, Alan Walker, Stacey Ehling, Greg Hanley, Mark Taylor, Kurt Davis

2. Salute to the Flag - done

3. Announcement of Open Public Meeting Act – done

4. Oath of Office – The following member were sworn in: Mark Taylor, Greg Hanley.

5. Election of Officers - Motion for the election of officers made by Stacey, second by Alan/Greg. All in favor and none opposed to confirm Thom Ritchie as Chair, Bill Brash as Vice Chair and Stacey Ehling as Secretary.

6. Meeting Minutes of Dec. 1, 2021 – Greg motion to approve, Thom second. Approved.

7. Shade Tree Appeal Hearings.

a) Joe You (conditional approval) – 34 Stonehurst Blvd. Application to remove a standing dead DBH Pin Oak – skin is peeling off, secondary pest damage. Mr. You stated that branches fell on the street and the neighbors are concerned. Commission explained the importance of protecting the old growth trees in our town, and the replacement street tree program which offers to replace the trees free of charge and that the program is not funded with taxpayer money. Also explained that if we determined the heritage tree was sound and the homeowner took the tree down the town would appraise the value and homeowner would have to pay a fine that would go into the account used for the replacement tree program. Mr. You said he was willing to replace the tree. Commission members reviewed the photos and concurred that the state of the tree warranted removal.

Action: Greg motioned to remove, Kurt seconded. Minutes reflect the approval of the removal of the tree. Mr. You will contact the town to put his name on the list and the committee will also note his request for the next planting. The Commission advised Mr. You to make sure he was using a licensed tree company for the removal. Mr. You noted he was using Happy Professional Tree Service.

b) Nelson Mercado (denial of heritage trees) 160 Kings Mountain Road, Freehold. Request to remove 7 heritage trees, one non-heritage tree. Mr. Mercado explained only 6 were heritage and one was not, and that some of the trees were less than 50 feet from the home foundation and showed images that portrayed a tape measure to confirm the tree locations. The trees are mostly in the side yard near the patio and in the front of the home. One tree is 12 feet off the house foundation, another in the front is 20 feet off the house foundation, and one is in the rear of the house and is rotted at the

base. The commission reviewed the photos and discussed different ways a tree is determined to be structurally sound or not and only a licensed tree expert can make that determination.

Action: Kurt made a motion that was seconded by Thom to approve the removal of the 7 identified heritage trees that were within 50 feet of the home foundation. Stacey noted to Mr. Mercado to consider not removing all the trees if possible since they are an asset to the neighborhood and are quite large. The commission approved the removals in the application. In addition, the commission agreed to evaluate a street tree that Mr. Mercado was concerned about, and he said that he would participate in the replacement program for that tree if it needed to be removed. His phone number is 732-977-7802.

c) John G. Hosenburg (conditional approval) 1 Walling Rd. Removal of 3 Silver Maples, 1 Mulberry, 2 Norway Maples (street trees), 1 Blue Spruce. Mr. Hosenburg provided photos of the trees for the Commission to review, and stated that 1 tree is growing into the fence, one was a Christmas tree, and the pines were planted by previous owners. He stated he wants to remove the trees to put up a PVC fence and they are in the way, and wants to clear the yard but has no specific plans yet. Mr. Hosenburg said he doesn't want to pay a price to take down every tree in his yard and asked about the 50 foot vs. 100 foot distance from the house foundation related to approval of the tree removals. The Commission explained a street beautification tree or one outside the 50 feet needs to be approved. There are no heritage trees on the site.

Commission reviewed the site and looked on Google Earth and recommend that Mr. Hosenburg try to work with those pines invest some money prune the properly, fertilize them and soil injections and 3-5 years he would have a nice thick screen (visual/sound) from the highway (Rt.18) behind his home. Will go long way to get more sound buffers from the highway. The white pines are not on the tree removal request. The two street trees, Norway Maples are dead, there is one more that is not. Mr. Hosenburg said he would be willing to take part in the tree replacement for the street trees.

Action: The Commission stated that we are not directly addressing the pine trees since they are not on the application. Thom made a motion to allow the removal of the trees listed on the application, 3 Silver Maples in decline, 2 Norway Maples, 1 Mulberry and 1 Blue Spruce and that the 2 street trees would be replaced at the next planting. Stacey seconded the motion.

The Commission recommended that Mr. Hosenburg check to make sure the chain link fence he wants to remove is not on DOT property and to double check the requirements for how far his fence has to be from the property line. He then asked about the removal of the trees growing in the fence and along the line where the fence he wants to put in would go. The Commission said it is up to the homeowner to make a decision to do what is best. Mr. Hosenburg again asked for the Commission to remark on the removal of the pine trees in the area of the fence and wanted guidance.

Action: To address Mr. Hosenburg's concerns Thom made a second motion to approve the removal of the trees listed on the application with the notation that the white pines (which are not heritage trees) that are in the way of the installation of a new fence that are on the

homeowners property (not DOT property) be included in the approval even though they are not on the original application. Kurt seconded the motion.

8. Unfinished Business

a) Spring 2022 Planting for street tree replacements (resident request list and Stillwells Corner Rd) and DPMA replacements. Commission noted it is too late to do a Spring planting but we will speak with Bill about planning a Fall 2022 planting. Social media posts will be created by Stacey to promote the program and tree requests by homeowners.

b) Stillwells Corner remove stakes and prune trees – Notice needs to go out to inform residents we are going to be doing inspections of the trees.

c) DPMA replacements – another American Hornbeam has died and others need to be reviewed on the list include a Maple and White Pine.

d) Enforcement of Shade Tree Ordinances – Discussion again as to how to make sure the ordinances are correct regarding the 50 foot vs. 100 ft. designation and making them more visible on the website for the public.

9. New Business

a) Shade Tree Monthly Report – reviewed packet.

b) CFMP Report and accomplishments report and Tree City USA paperwork all have been submitted.

c) Financial report of Shade Tree Accounts – Alan stated that he will have the financials for the next meeting and trust balance for the Commission to review and approve.

d) Arbor Day April 29 (school) & 30 (arboretum) : Seedlings are going to be a problem to obtain but Thom is going to see what he can do. Commission discussed which school was in line for the tree planting this year. Erickson was determined to be the recipient this year and Stacey will contact Kathy Armin to see if they are amenable.

e) Correspondence – Nothing new.

f) Publication of 2022 meeting dates and times.

g) DPMA Irrigation repairs and maintenance improvements. No irrigation repairs until spring. Growing concern about the pink flags and items near the fence toward the front of the tree ring. Need to add deer protection to the proposal for the next plantings. Township can buy the materials and Boy/Girl Scouts can help with the installation. Discussion of projects that need to be done at Durand was tabled but next meeting will make a list and determine priorities and submit for review.

10. Open Public Discussion – no one participated.

11. Good and Welfare

Total Pro Expo – good show. Good speakers. NJ Forestry Conference coming soon.

12. Adjourn at 9:26 p.m.

Minutes by Stacey Ehling, Secretary