

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Morris Plains Shade Tree Commission held on March 4, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Borough Chambers. Present at roll call were:

Present: Mrs. Margaret Law
Mr. Donald Salerno, Vice Chairman
Mr. Lawrence Travaglia
Mr. Lloyd Williams, Chairman
Councilwoman Laurie Fu
Mr. Dave Dubee
Absent: Mr. C. David Visscher

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams stated that adequate notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Law of 1975, "Open Public Meetings Act."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Law moved that the minutes of the Commission's January 14, 2015 Re-Organization Meeting be approved as circulated, seconded by Mr. Salerno Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Williams opened the meeting to the public to speak on matters other than those on the agenda. Hearing none, he closed this portion of the meeting to the public.

BUDGET

Mr. Williams advised there is 41,040.00 remaining in the budget. This includes all purchase orders for 2015 and expenses incurred so far this year.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

FORESTER'S REPORT

Mr. Dave Dubee, Forester presented his report. He commented that he has noticed dead and broken limbs hanging over streets in various parts of the Borough.

1 Briarcliff Road – Forester stated that (1) 24"-36" pin oak tree needs pruning.

3 Briarcliff Road – Forester stated that (1) 24"-36" pin oak tree needs pruning.

32 Greenwood Road – Forester stated (1) limb 10"-12" needs to be removed.

45 Malapardis Road – Forester stated that (1) 36"+ Pin Oak needs to be pruned. Tree is actually located on Jim Fear Drive.

60 Sun Valley Way – Forester stated (1) 24"-36" oak tree needs pruning.

Corner of Glenbrook Road and Homer Avenue – Forester stated (1) 24"-36" needs pruning. The tree is in the small island at this site.

Mr. Dubee next discussed the issue relating to the Ash trees in the Borough. He provided information as to where he has found these trees in the Borough. There are a few on Mountain Way, Washington Avenue, and Watnong Avenue. However, the largest collection of Ash trees that he has found is located on Laurel Street. He recommended treating these trees since there are approximately 40 trees in a row. If one tree becomes infected, it is likely all the trees may eventually have to be taken down along the entire street. They are all Borough trees.

Mr. Williams asked for more information concerning what treating these trees will involve as well as the cost for doing so.

Mr. Dubee presented several options to the Commission:

1. A one-year treatment could be done. This will cost approximately \$70 per tree (\$2,777.60). A two-year treatment could also be done (\$5,800). The two-year treatment would only be done once, but it is more costly. This treatment uses the trunk to deliver the protective solution.
2. Another method is injecting a capsule into the root system. This option provides a "little better control"
3. The option chosen will most likely depend on the funds available in the budget.

He commented on what he knows one or more other municipalities are doing to address this problem and the details of how the treatment is being addressed in their budget(s). He specifically commented on what Roseland is doing. Mr. Dubee advised the Ash tree treatments are done in the spring, generally in April. He offered additional information partly based on questions asked by Commission members. Ultimately, he recommended there be a one-year treatment, partly to conserve budget funds and also to take a somewhat "wait-and-see" approach. If the treatment needs to be repeated, it will still be the same amount of money, but it will be stretched over two years instead of of spending close to \$6,000 in 2015. Using the trunk versus the root system is "a little bit better" because material is not entered into the soil; drilling directly into the trunk and there is nowhere for the material to escape. He does not believe treating every other tree is a good plan. Once an individual tree is protected, it is protected even if the tree next to it gets the disease.

Cross discussion about the Ash tree disease and potential plans to prevent an infestation, including that Mr. Dubee does not necessarily think every Ash tree in the Borough is a Borough tree and that many, but not all, Ash trees in parks have already been taken down.

The Commission agreed that the Ash tree treatment as recommended by Mr. Dubee for the approximately 40 trees located along Laurel Street be approved.

Mr. Salerno moved that all the pruning work discussed earlier and including the Ash tree treatment work, be approved, seconded by Mrs. Law. Voice vote. All in favor.
Motion carried.

Mr. Williams mentioned two trees located on Franklin Place that can be discussed at next month's Commission meeting.

Mr. Dubee replied he will check these trees and will report back to the Commission at the April meeting.

Mr. Salerno advised of a tree at a corner house at the intersection of Mountain Way and Franklin Place, on the Mountain Way side. The property owners state this is not their tree, but he does not believe it is a Borough tree planted by the Commission. The limbs are dangerously across the walkway. He is seeking a resolution to this issue.

Mrs. Law advised the property owners received letters from the Commission requesting that this problem be addressed, but this was years ago. She suggested that perhaps measurements will need to be taken to determine whether this is or is not a Borough tree.

Mr. Salerno advised he will do the measuring and will then discuss his findings with the property owners. He also provided information as to how he plans to do his measurements.

Mrs. Law provided commentary about what she remembers historically about this tree and about the various issues it has presented over the years.

Mr. Travaglia asked that if this tree presents a danger to public safety and is causing other problems, why can't the Commission determine that it will have to be taken down?

Tree to be placed on Work Sheet.

Mr. Travaglia asked about the roadway in Foxwood, is there an easement?

The understanding is that there is no easement. He asked this question specifically in connection with certain trees planted at Foxwood.

Mrs. Law stated she believes Foxwood is responsible for caring for their own trees.

Councilwoman Fu concurred with Mrs. Law's understanding.

Cross discussion about trees at Foxwood, including that Mr. Salerno stated that the entire Foxwood property is private property. However, due to certain issues in the State involving similar properties, some municipalities took responsibility for picking up garbage and plowing the roadway.

REPORT OF COUNCILWOMAN FU

Councilwoman Fu discussed an item she had distributed to the Commission members. The item provides information concerning various planting seasons – each color represents a different planting season. Three plantings have been done so far. The

dark red shade designates trees that were refused. Sixty-two trees will be dedicated to the Honeywell property and planted along Route 53. She provided details of the ongoing work she has been doing to “move” trees around to better locate them, especially moving some trees out of park space.

She commented on the upcoming spring planting and the letters that will be sent to residents advising that they are designated for a tree planting. She anticipates some number of people will again refuse the planting of trees at their properties. These trees can then be moved back into the park space(s) as appropriate. If necessary, some trees can be moved into the fall planting.

She remarked that the last two or three pages will be of most interest to the Commission members. Eighty-seven trees are proposed to be planted at residential locations in the spring. Additionally, 62 trees will be planted along Route 53 at Honeywell and 58 trees will be planted in parks (most of which will be planted in the fall planting).

Cross discussion about recommendations for Evergreen trees to be planted. Mr. Dubee provided specific recommendations and guidance regarding Evergreen trees.

Councilwoman Fu directed Commission members to the last page of her report (in black and white) stating this information (149) provides the breakdown for the spring. She recommended holding off on actually preparing a purchase order right now. Instead it would be best to check out the proposed planting spaces and do the mailing before doing the purchase order. She did say it would be good to let them know what the preferred varieties are, and Gail is prepared to do that. The Council approved the extension of the contract, but documents must still be sent to them.

Mr. Williams asked about the trees that have “failed” such as the ones at Watnong Park. The DPW advised that these trees were well watered. Will these failed trees be replaced since this was part of the agreement?

Councilwoman Fu advised these trees will have to be mentioned to the contractor. She believes the trees looked fine for quite a while, then suddenly toward the end of the season, their conditions deteriorated.

Cross discussion about whether the responsibility for watering the newly-planted trees was contained in the agreement with the contractor, including that the contractor may believe it is less expensive to simply replace failed trees than to be the one watering the trees.

Councilwoman Fu recommended that the Commission plan to check all the trees that were planted to assess their conditions. At the end of two years, there will be an official assessment as to the status of all the trees planted (will occur sometime during the fall of 2015). The Commission should know before this time arrives so any problems can be addressed with the contractor. Gail will send the paperwork on to the tree contractor; the Commission does not have to do this. Once the contractor is notified, Mr. Williams should contact them about the failed trees and also to discuss the

upcoming planting season to avoid scheduling problems. She advised that the Community Forestry Management Plan has been approved. A form was received – like an accomplishment report advising what was done for the first year. She prepared and submitted this form, and it, too, was approved. She still must check to determine what reimbursements have been received so far.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Arbor Day is on Friday, April 24, 2015, and trees have been ordered. The secretary will contact Mountain Way school.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Travaglia moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Salerno. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

Karen M. Coffey
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan
Recording Secretary