

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Morris Plains Shade Tree Commission held on July 1, 2015 at 7:05 p.m. in the Borough Chambers. Present at roll call were:

Present: Mrs. Margaret Law
Mr. Donald Salerno, Vice Chairman
Mr. Lloyd Williams, Chairman
Councilwoman Laurie Fu

Absent: Mr. Lawrence Travaglia
Mr. C. David Visscher
Mr. Dave Dubee, Forester

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 June 3, 2015 Regular 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.

Ms. Mary Kinniery, 5 Sunrise Drive, Morris Plains, stated she is present at this meeting to discuss several items. She first advised of a large dead Oak tree that is located very close to the curb; she is uncertain whether this is a Borough tree. The tree is in front of her neighbor's house, and she has not measured any distances, but the tree "is very big and very dead." The house is next to hers and is on the right side heading toward Sun Valley Way. Ms. Kinniery asked if there are any Borough ordinances addressing the cutting down of personal mature trees on personal property. She reported that many such trees have recently been taken down in her neighborhood.

A Commission member advised there is an ordinance discussing this matter.

Mr. Salerno stated there is no regulation regarding the cutting of private property trees. However, there is an ordinance relating to clear cutting on property. If the property is of a certain size (an acre or more) a property owner cannot clear cut without first obtaining a permit to do so.

Ms. Kinniery stated this property is on Grove Avenue and has been clear cut. She does not believe this property is an acre or larger. She had one or more photographs of the site. She thinks the property owners may be installing a new lawn area.

Cross discussion about this situation between Ms. Kinniery and Commission members.

Mr. Williams thanked Ms. Kinniery for the information she provided. The Oak tree matter will be looked into further. There is nothing the Commission can do about trees being cut down on private property when the property is less than one acre.

BUDGET

Mr. Williams stated there is \$19,000 left in the budget at this time

The Commission Secretary advised that the Forester has commented on all the memoranda dated June 19, 2015 and on.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

FORESTER'S REPORT

The Commission Secretary reported the Forester agrees. The tree is 12" -24" with a stump of the same size.

15 Hawthorne Avenue – Tree in front of residence is dead and needs to be removed.

35 Park Way – The Commission Secretary stated the Forester checked both trees and reports they are both in good condition. The trees are located on Granniss Avenue.

Mr. Salerno stated he will look at these trees tomorrow.

2 Northview Drive – The Commission Secretary stated the Forester advised this tree is in good shape; the tree was pruned last year at the property owner's request.

Mr. Salerno will observe the tree tomorrow to confirm what the Forster is reporting.

22 Diana Road – The Commission Secretary stated the Forester recommends pruning. It is a 12" – 24" tree.

Cross discussion specifically about the fact that there is an April 13, 2015 memorandum in which the property owner is requesting that a tree be pruned or removed.

Councilwoman Fu recommended checking to determine if this tree had been pruned earlier this year; perhaps the Department of Public Works (DPW) was going to prune the tree.

2 Layer Drive – Councilwoman Fu believes this work may have been done; she will check with the DPW staff tomorrow to see if they can handle this matter.

Mr. Williams stated all the trees on Layer Drive need elevation since they are growing quite large, but there are many trees.

155 Mountain Way – The Commission Secretary stated the Forester states tree needs pruning.

Mr. Williams requested a motion to approve the Work Sheet projects.

Mr. Salerno moved to approve, seconded by Mrs. Law. Voice vote. All in favor.

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Cross discussion about the recent tree planting, including that Councilwoman Fu and one or more Commission members commented that they are seeing some trees (Route 53 was mentioned) with brown leaves.

Councilwoman Fu asked the Commission members to keep their eyes on the newly planted trees so that is necessary any such trees can be reported to the vendor.

Mr. Williams reported there was a dead tree at Johnson & Johnson that was replaced. Two additional trees (two extra ones that Honeywell did not want). These extra trees were planted at Johnson & Johnson. He also commented on a mistake that occurred involving the vendor going to Malapardis Park in Hanover Township. He was able to direct the vendor from Malapardis Park to the correct location at the corner of Malapardis Road and Littleton Road before any planting took place.

Councilwoman Fu stated she does not think the plantings were ideally done: (1) trees should have been planted by June 15, 2015 according to the contract, (2) difficulty getting the vendor to commit to a date, and (3) the date agreed to was only two days away. However, once the vendor is physically here, they do a “fabulous job” in planting the trees.

The Commission Secretary commented on several changes that took place involving where trees were ultimately planted and also comments received from some residents.

Councilwoman Fu commented on the reaction of one property owner who stated he did not receive a letter about tree planting; he was quite upset and asked that the tree be removed.

The Commission Secretary advised of her communications with this resident.

Councilwoman Fu advised that when the vendor went to remove this tree, it had already been pulled out of the ground, so this tree was lost. Councilwoman Fu explained the care being given to the trees. Several trees from the last year’s planting were also replaced; she provided details about these replacement trees and where they were planted.

Cross discussion about some of the other issues that occurred during the tree planting process.

Councilwoman Fu advised that the Beautification Committee had asked for two Beech trees, but the vendor bought two more Maple trees instead. Since the vendor does not like taking trees back, these two additional Maple trees were planted at the Community Garden. The two Beech trees are still needed as well as two more trees for Roberts Garden. There are about 75 more trees to be planted if the Borough chooses to plant all 75. She reported that a row of Arborvitae at Watnong Park (near the parking lot) were removed due to having been “deer eaten”. They were not replaced, but will be with 12 new trees. Replacement trees will also be planted behind the DPW garage.

Cross discussion about trees near the DPW garage, including property line issues, currently dead trees, possible other property owners who may want trees, arborvitae trees in general, requesting an extension on the time period to plant, future residential tree planting, possible planting at the

affordable housing site, and trees used as screening.

Councilwoman Fu stated she is aware of approximately 40 – 45 locations where planting can be done. She also reminded of the CEU's requirements and the upcoming conference in the fall 2015.

Mr. Williams reminded that the Commission will not be meeting in August. He will talk with the Forester about a tree on Kosakowski Drive. He will also have him check another tree on Watnong Drive.

Councilwoman Fu recommended that the Commission create a list of the trees it wants by the end of August or early September. This would include both locations for planting and species varieties to be planted.

General cross discussion about different issues, including that the Forester will also be re-checking a stump at 44 Sylvan Drive, apparently there is an issue of a retaining wall and that there is a new State contact relating to the tree planting.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Karen M. Coffey
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan
Recording Secretary