

City of Plainfield
Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 25, 2018 - 7:30 pm
Plainfield City Hall, 515 Watchung Ave., Second Floor Conference Room
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

Regular Monthly Meeting:

Standing Agenda:

Call to Order and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Mary Burgwinkle, Barbara Spellmeyer, Holly Hoffman and Oscar Riba. Ron Johnson arrived shortly after roll call. Vanessa Doman was excused.

Open Public Meeting Act: Publication was handled by the Planning Division.

Minutes of March 28, 2018 Meeting: The minutes were approved with no changes.

CEU Count and Review: Mr. Riba presented a spreadsheet that he designed for use by the Commissioners and Ms. Stefel for tracking CEUs. He suggested that Commissioners enter the information about the CEUs they obtain and send it to him and Ms. Stefel. Since last meeting, Ms. Hoffman attended a webinar sponsored by the USDA Urban Forest Connections. That should bring our total for 2018 to 7. Ms. Burgwinkle reminded the group that when a certificate is received from the USDA, it must be emailed to Shannon.hart@dep.nj.gov as our CEUs are given by the NJ Urban and Community Forestry group.

Budget uses this month: Ms. Burgwinkle did not receive a budget run in time for the meeting, but she believes that it is unchanged from last month. The tree trust account has increased due to the \$890 that we received as a gift from the Plainfield-North Plainfield Rotary Club to help defray the costs of the plantings at the YMCA property.

Business Agenda:

Arbor Day: Commissioners discussed final plans for Arbor Day, which will be held on April 27th at 11:00 am at City Hall. The Commissioners did a final review of the program and Mr. Riba suggested edits to the format. Ms. Burgwinkle will be Master of Ceremonies at the event and will do short remarks from STC. Ms. Hoffman will announce the Tree City USA award and will announce the 2018 Specimen Tree, the large Ash tree on the front lawn of 1236 Denmark Road. We will announce that DPW is preparing the downtown planting sites for replacement of 5 trees in the Watchung Avenue business district.

CSIP Grant: Five Commissioners went into the field on Sunday April 8th at 9:00 am to remove stakes and wires from the CSIP grant trees in Ward 4. The wires were cut and placed into garbage bags that were removed from the sites. Stakes were placed between the tree and the

curb in the ROW. Stake holes were filled and mulch and dirt raked away from the root flares. This was done in preparation for the visit from the NJ Urban and Community Forestry group which is scheduled for May 18th. Mr. Riba reminded Commissioners to keep their time from that day as STC can use time in the field for in kind contributions for some grants.

Removal/Replacement of 2016 Road Improvement Trees: Ms. Burgwinkle reported on email correspondence with Doug Johnson of Remington Vernick, the engineers who worked on the roadway improvements. The removal of the dead trees and the planting of new trees will begin the second week in May. Ms. Hoffman suggested that we ask for Tupelo, Red Maple and some Pin Oak rather than the Redbud which was unsuccessful. The landscaper does not intend to stake. This prompted a discussion of the Commissioners about staking and taking stakes down less than two years after the tree is planted. The argument against staking is that the roots of the tree learn to take hold better when the young tree is subjected to wind. An argument in favor is that the stakes keep deer and other animals and people away from the tree at a formative stage. STC does not have a firm policy on staking and the discussion will continue. Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Burgwinkle plan to observe the process.

Other Business:

Safety vests: Ms. Spellmeyer suggested that we purchase vests to wear in the field that identify us as Shade Tree Commissioners. She pointed out that when we trim or do other work on trees, this would let citizens know that we have an official role and the authority to work on street trees. She will get prices so that we can move forward with this idea.

Downtown Plainfield Alliance news: Mr. Johnson announced that the Downtown Plainfield Alliance has applied for a TD Bank grant to plant trees on a number of business district streets.

New Jersey Tree Foundation news: Ms. Burgwinkle announced that the New Jersey Tree Foundation is planting trees at PAAAS magnet school grounds on Thursday, May 16th from 9 to 12. Elena Lopez, Program Director of the foundation asked if a Commissioner would attend and Ms. Hoffman agreed to attend. Ms. Lopez also wants to do a Tree Keepers workshop this summer which would be free to Plainfield residents. Ms. Burgwinkle agreed to contact the Plainfield Public Library to get a quote for space and technical assistance and this would be a good opportunity for STC to co-sponsor the event.

Post Arbor Day priorities: Ms. Burgwinkle asked the Commissioners to read for discussion at the next meeting a risk control bulletin that she handed out. Commissioners asked questions about assignments to the wards this year which will be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2018 at 7:30 pm.