

City of Plainfield  
Shade Tree Commission  
Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 25, 2019, 7:30 pm  
Plainfield City Hall, 515 Watchung Avenue, Second Floor Conference Room  
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

**Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Standing Agenda:**

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm. Present were Planning Liaison April Stefel, Chair Oscar Riba, Vanessa Doman, Drue Doman, Mayra Paredes, and Barbara Spellmeyer. Also presents were residents of 708 Garden Street, Plainfield.
2. **Open Public Meeting Act:** Publication was handled by the Planning Division.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting of August 28 were approved with revisions.
4. **Continuing Education Units:** Not discussed.
5. **Budget Uses this Month:** Not discussed.

**Business Agenda:**

1. **Request for Tree Removal by Residents.** Residents at 708 Garden Street addressed the Commission, requesting the removal of the shade tree, a pin oak, in front of their house. They argued that the tree was leaning toward their house to a degree that caused them great concern. Prior to the meeting, April, Oscar and Barbara had all inspected the site on separate occasions. All three judged the tree to be healthy, with many surface roots that had buckled the sidewalk. After the residents' departure, members discussed their request and considered photographic evidence verifying the residents' claim. By a majority vote, members resolved to remove the tree.
2. **Report on PMUA Environmental Fair.** Members agreed that the Commission's participation in the Fair was a success. During the Fair, one resident, Nerada Williams, expressed an interest in the work of the Commission. Following the event, several members discussed the possibility of recruiting her as a new member. Barbara agreed to reach out to her.

**3. Discussion of NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Conference.** The four members who plan to attend the conference--Vanessa and Drue, Mayra and Barb--discussed lodging and transportation.

**4. Question Regarding STC Commissioner Liability.** Vanessa raised a question about member liability should the appropriate situation arise. Her particular concern was that her emails might be subpoenaed. April explained that members' liability is protected by the City of Plainfield Adopted Shade Tree Ordinance.

**5. Fall Presentation with Lecture by Bruce Crawford, Rutgers, at the duCret School.** The members discussed preparations for the the Crawford event, scheduled for Nov. 7, 7:00-9:00 pm. Questions included the possibility of limiting the audience to 50 attendees and the advisability of asking attendees to RSVP. The Commission resolved to include in the promotional flyer a note about limited seating on a first-come-first-served basis.

**6. Residents' Requests for Tree Removals.**

1477 Francis Lane resident Laverne Ingram requested the removal of a tree at her address. After inspecting the site, April agreed with the resident that the tree was in decline and announced that it would be placed on the Removal List.

The resident at 716 Huntington Avenue, Kathleen Nitzsche, requested the removal of the ash tree in front of her property. After inspecting it, April reported that the tree is healthy and does not exhibit insect damage but requires crown pruning. She requested that another member visit the site to confirm her assessment.

Mr. S. Ginsberg, owner of an apartment complex at 666 W. Front Street, asked for the removal of three trees, honey locusts near overhead power lines, fronting his complex. After an inspection of the site, April concluded that two of the three trees should be removed. The overhead wires would require the intervention of PSE&G.

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm. Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, 2019.