

**City of Plainfield
Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of Meeting of February 25, 2015
Planning Conference Room, City Hall
515 Watching Avenue
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060**

1. Roll Call and Call to Order: Chair Peter Simone called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. Present were Mr. Simone, Mary Burgwinkle (via conference call), Jan Massey, Barbara Spellmeyer, Oscar Riba and Lynne Wallace from the Commission. David Frost was not present. Also present: April Stefel (Shade Tree Commission Liaison, Planning Division).

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

3. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 28, 2015 meeting were approved by the Commissioners with one editing change. Ms. Burgwinkle was reminded to send final minutes to Director of Administration and Finance Ron West and Ms. Stefel for posting on the website.

4. Shade Tree Commission Items:

Shade Tree Commission Roster

Commissioner Lynne Wallace was in attendance at her first meeting. Mr. Simone welcomed her and thanked her for joining. She is a teacher who is concerned about tree trimming in Plainfield. She was given a list of the contact addresses and phone numbers for STC. Ms. Spellmeyer and Mr. Riba's addresses were switched on the list and Mr. Simone noted that it would be corrected. Also, Mr. Frost has advised that he has documents showing that his term expired 12-31-14, where the City records show 12-31-15. Mr. Simone advised that Mr. Frost will resign when we find another member.

Financial Report

Mr. Simone noted that all membership dues have been paid to New Jersey Shade Tree Federation for 2015 and that an updated list of active STC members is being provided to the Federation. STC's Community Forestry Management Plan 5 year revision is due 8-2016, and there was discussion about applying for a CSIP (Community Stewardship Incentive Program) Grant for money to hire a consultant to do it. Ms. Stefel reported that the Recreation Department has applied for the grant that we would be using for that purpose and that they will need to withdraw their application if STC is to apply. Ms. Burgwinkle and Mr. Simone will look at the CFMP and determine if we can revise it ourselves and have the revision reviewed by a consultant instead of spending \$3,500 on the consultant to do the entire revision.

Greening of Union County 2014-Tree Selection/Site Selection-2014-Follow-up. Regarding the topic of citizens violating ordinances if they damage or destroy trees planted in the public right of way, Ms. Massey reported that there is an ordinance, and that corporation counsel needs to be consulted on how to issue a citation and how much citizens can be fined. Ms. Burgwinkle is continuing to do research on a statement for a mailer announcing that the city has an easement over properties near the street and that homeowners cannot interfere with trees planted in the easement, she will also research the ordinances. Ms. Spellmeyer gave Mr. Simone a list of reasons why it is beneficial to plant trees that can be incorporated into a notice, Mr. Simone has a list as well.

Tree Maintenance. Mr. Simone asked Ms. Massey to contact John Louise about resuming tree trimming from lists he was given and grinding out stumps beginning in April. He recognized that there have been two bad winters that have taken a lot of DPW time. Mr. Simone noted that STC had previously agreed to use up to \$10,000 of its budget to engage outside contractors for raising tree canopy and removal of cross branches in selected areas. Bids were obtained from Davey's and Caffrey, a bid will be solicited from Tamke. Mr. Simone drove around looking for streets where trees were planted 10 or 15 years ago. He found trees in the 3rd ward in the Cedarbrook School area, and he has a complete list of suggestions. Ms. Spellmeyer asked if Commissioners can trim trees if they want to, and was told that they can. STC should let DPW know about trimming 5 to 7 year old trees and try to trim when there is a pickup planned by DPW. Homeowners are not supposed to trim trees themselves.

Also on tree maintenance, Ms. Spellmeyer called John Louise about the tree guards this winter during the snow events. He eventually got back to her and is checking on the tree guards.

Also, since a portion of the budget will be used for maintenance, we will need for form a strategy for plantings. We have had some tree requests, Mr. Simone is discussing a request from a homeowner on Jefferson who wants a pair of trees, he is trying to reach consensus on the species. It is possible that some London Planes near Myrtle may need to be replaced, and there have been some other inquiries. Mr. Simone and Ms. Spellmeyer will confer about the types of trees, Tupelos were suggested as they are slow growers.

Arbor Day 2015. STC plans to use the Drake House Museum (West Front St., 4th Ward) as the site for the Arbor Day celebration which will take place on Arbor Day, which is the last Friday in April (4-24-15). Storms have damaged trees on the front lawn, which is very large and visible from Front Street. Budget is \$3,000 due to PSEG having given the money that it would have used to plant trees in containers at another site on W. Second Street at STC's request. Mr. Simone, Ms. Spellmeyer and Ms. Wallace will meet at Mr. Simone's home on 3-8-15 at 11:00 am to discuss the trees/shrubs to be planted and the other work to be done for Arbor Day. Ms. Burgwinkle will contact John Louise with this information so that he can schedule it and invite school children to the ceremony. Ms. Burgwinkle will work on the program and notifying the Mayor's office. Mr. Simone will attend a meeting of the Historical Society to brief them about the Drake House plantings.

New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference. Mr. Simone announced that the 2015 New Jersey Shade Tree Federation conference will be held at Bally's in Atlantic City, 10-23-15 and 10-24-15. Commissioners should calendar, let Mr. Simone know if they would like to attend. Commissioners who need CORE Training should plan to attend; Ms. Wallace will need CORE training. Ms. Spellmeyer asked a question about the communication that we received from NJSTF CEU on CEU credits, believed that there were duplicative entries. The CEU staff note a name for each session attended and do not aggregate them, so her name appears twice for attending CORE training.

5. Adjournment and Next Meeting:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m. Next meeting is March 25, 2015 at 7:30 pm.