

**City of Plainfield
Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of Meeting of May 27, 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 7:40. Present were Mr. Simone, Barbara Spellmeyer, Oscar Riba. Mary Burgwinkle, Jan Massey, Lynne Wallace and David Frost were 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 April 22, 2015 meeting were approved by the Commissioners who were present with one editing change, that Mr. Riba attended the end of that meeting. With only three commissioners attending, Mr. Simone recognized that there was not a quorum but he opted to continue the meeting with no voting.

4. Shade Tree Commission Items:

Arbor Day Celebration

Mr. Simone thanked everyone who was able to attend Arbor Day at the Drake House. He reported that it was a great effort and the Historical Society is watering the new plantings. The final shipment of ferns has arrived. Mr. Simone picked them up on Saturday. Ms. Spellmeyer offered to help plant them.

Tree Guards

Mr. Simone reported that he is ordering the tree guards from A. M. Leonard. He will order them and have them ready to put on the trees. Ms. Spellmeyer pointed out that they can be put on the trees at any time, that weed wackers are as damaging as the deer. Mr. Simone remarked that we have not spent much of our budget this year, that Arbor Day plantings were funded out of the PSEG trust fund.

Tree Maintenance

Mr. Simone will ask Jan Massey to approach John Louise about tree maintenance. For instance, there are many trees that were planted in the past four or so years that still have the wire and tree guards. A discussion ensued about removing them. Mr. Simone has removed them himself from time to time, loaded them in his hatchback and taken them down to DPW. Ms. Spellmeyer asked how much work this takes. Mr. Simone suggested bringing a wire cutter if you are taking them out. Ms. Stefel remarked that she has taken them down when she sees them, and that a citizen took down the stakes from the E. 9th St. pocket park. Consensus was that DPW should do this. Requests should be copied to Eric Watson and Rick Smiley. Stakes should be left in for two years, but then taken down. Mr. Simone will provide lists of trees planted in the last two years.

Regarding our contracting with professionals to do tree pruning in the fall, Mr. Simone has received estimates from Davey's, Caffrey, Tamke. He has attempted to reach Disch several times, and does not plan to continue trying to reach them as we only need three estimates.

NJ Shade Tree Federation/NJ Department of Agriculture/EAB Traps

NJ Shade Tree Federation reached out to STCs in the state for help in placing Emerald Ash Borer traps around the state. Ms. Spellmeyer has received the trap, each town gets one trap. Discussion ensued about where to put it. Apparently, there is a large ash tree in the cemetery on Plainfield Avenue. Mr. Simone will bring a step ladder when he and Ms. Spellmeyer go to Drake House to plant ferns and they will go to the cemetery and install the trap.

Tree Planting

STC expects to use between \$10,000 and \$11,000 of the budget for trees this year. In the past, we have divided the trees equally between wards. Mr. Simone suggested that we discuss the percentages given that there are 21 miles of roadway in the First Ward, 33 miles of roadway in the Second Ward, 32 miles of roadway in the Third Ward and 17.9 miles in the Fourth Ward. Discussion ensued. For instance, in the Fourth Ward, there are narrow or no tree lawns in some locations, and there are many rental properties so not clear who will water a new tree. STC has spent 3X more than we ever spend on Arbor Day on plantings at Drake House, which is in the Fourth Ward, and two additional Arbor Day plantings were done in the Fourth Ward in the past 8 years. So, STC may need to look at high impact group planting locations in that ward. STC will discuss at the next meeting. Ms. Stefel will let Mr. Simone know when we get the Greening of Union County grant materials. We will be planting about 60 trees. Regarding citizen complaints, we will refer them to Planning and Ms. Stefel will handle them. We have citizens who would like to plant trees themselves, they need our express permission. We will handle requests for trees as they come in and will document them. We also have a balance in the trust fund that we can use to plant trees.

Shade Tree Conference

Ms. Stefel needs to attend the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference in October. Others who would like to attend should let Mr. Simone know.

Shade Tree Time Log

Mr. Simone has emailed a sample time log. We must document time to use as in-kind match for grants we are applying for. He has suggested that we all complete them and send to him twice a year at end of June and the end of the year. We can also use the hours for budgeting purposes.

5. Adjournment and Next Meeting:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. Next meeting is June 24, 2015 at 7:30 pm.