

Borough of Chatham Annual Report 2015 Shade Tree Commission

Summary

Below are highlights from the year:

- Planted a total of 63 trees in the Borough
- Named a new Chairman, Patrick Carroll, and Vice Chairman, John Barton
- Maintained Tree City USA Status
- Participated in the Fishawack Festival with a Shade Tree booth
- Worked with Borough Council to evaluate and ultimately save the historic Lum Oak tree.
- Worked with DPW to implement a treatment plan for the Emerald Ash Borer

Mission

Chatham Borough has had a Shade Tree Commission since 1909. The Shade Tree Commission's responsibilities include planting and maintaining trees along Borough streets, public rights-of ways, and municipal open spaces. The goal of the Shade Tree Commission is to create and maintain optimum tree cover and species diversity while keeping up a pruning and removal program that will keep our streets and parks safe.

Members

The Shade Tree Commission consists of 6 Volunteers. The commission Chair is Patrick Carroll and the Commission Vice Chairman is John Barton. Volunteers spend time on special projects such as: community outreach, identifying planting locations for new trees, education, and reviewing residents' tree concerns. The Commission members take time out of their busy schedules to be stewards of the health and safety of the Borough's "green infrastructure".

Tree Removals and Maintenance

The Department of Public Works (DPW) does an excellent job throughout the year assisting with assessments, pruning, and removals. Trees are removed when they are a safety risk, damaged, or are damaging the surrounding infrastructure.

Tree Plantings

Tree plantings are a time-intensive activity for the commission. Identifying locations in the Borough, coordinating with homeowners, contractors, and nurseries all contribute to significant time and labor. Trees are selected based on characteristics and planting location. Trees are selected to be visually appealing, have limited sensitivity to insects and diseases, tolerant of harsh urban conditions, and limit interaction with overhead utility service.

Due to significant budget constraints the borough did not plant any new trees in 2011 and saw significant loss of trees in 2011 and 2012. We are now well behind our goal of zero net loss and will need to continue to be aggressive to get back on track in the coming years.

In 2015 the Borough planted 63 new trees and used budget money left at the end of the year to secure trees for the Spring planting.

Budget

In 2015 the Shade Tree Budget was:

Description	Amount
Planting	\$19,500
Professional Services	\$2,500
Total	\$22,000

Tree City USA Certification

In 2015 Chatham Borough was once again recognized as a "Tree City USA". To qualify as a Tree City USA, we are required to maintain a management plan, a budget, celebrate Arbor Day, and have an established a Shade Tree commission.

State Recognition

The Shade Tree Commission completed several activities in order to complete state certification. Several members of the commission completed online training and education courses in order to maintain ongoing education requirements. This year Fran Drew attended the annual New Jersey Tree Federation Conference.

Regular Meetings

The Commission held six regular meeting during 2015 on the third Tuesday every other month, starting in January. Meetings are held in Borough Hall, and published for the public to attend. The 2016 meeting schedule is as follows:

January 19, 2016
March 15, 2016
May 17, 2016
July 19, 2016
September 20, 2016
November 15, 2016

Fishawack Festival

This Chatham, NJ festival is held annually on the second Saturday of June. The festival features local merchants, non-profit organizations, artists, artisans, antiques, children's games and rides, and fun festival food of all kinds. Thousands of Borough residents attend each year. The Shade Tree Commission hosted a booth at the event on June 13, 2015. It was an excellent opportunity to let educate residents on the importance of trees as well as the work performed by the commission.

Lum Oak Tree

In early 2015 neighboring towns had incidents where large trees failed causing injury and property damage. The council had a certified tree expert survey the town for trees that may pose a similar risk. One of the trees of concern was the historic Scarlet Oak in the middle of Lum Field. After careful pruning and treatment and four separate evaluations, both the Council and Shade Tree Commission agreed that the tree should remain. As a precaution, a fence will be placed around the perimeter of the tree thus keeping people out from under the branches while helping protect the root system.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer has finally arrived in our region. Bergen, Mercer, Union, Hunterdon and Somerset counties have all reported populations of the insect. In consultation with the DPW and Certified Tree Expert John Linson, the Borough will begin treating ash trees in 2016 in an effort to save as many of the town's healthy ash trees as possible.

2016 Goals

- Continue to identify and implement public awareness initiatives
- Undertake 2 plantings (one spring, one fall)
- Continue to define membership and roles
- Maintain Tree City USA Status
- Have 5 or more events published in a local newspaper
- Plant more than 75 trees for Borough residents
- Improve processes
- Improve use of technology
- Monitor Emerald Ash Borer and treatment program

