

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

September 15, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Chairman Patrick Carroll called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Shade Tree Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building. The Open Public Meetings Act was read aloud.

| Name | Present | Absent |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Patrick Carroll (Chrmn.) | X | |
| John Barton | X | |
| Fran Drew | | X |
| Colleen Truppo | X | |
| Kenneth Fekete | X | |
| Thomas Boyle | X – present on speaker phone | |
| Christopher Jadro | | X |
| Dean Wilson | X | |
| Tony Torello | X – present on speaker phone | |
| Council Member Kass | | X |

Also present were members of the public: Rupa Dave, Daniel Farkas, Michael Dean, Susan Anne & Kristy Chmura, George Sweetin.

Public Comment

Rupa Dave, 12 Sussex Ave., told Commissioners about a hickory tree in front of her house that has become a nuisance and a safety concern. This is a Borough tree. It's dropping nuts, close in size to a golf ball. Ms. Dave distributed photos and one of the huge nuts. She is afraid of the neighborhood children getting hit by these nuts. Daniel Farkas, 14 Sussex Ave., was also present, and agreed with Ms. Dave's observations. Mr. Farkas stated the falling nuts have caused a couple of thousand dollars worth of damage to his car. Ms. Dave and Mr. Farkas are requesting that the tree be taken down.

Mr. Torello confirmed the location of this problem tree. The tree itself is healthy, but the size and impact of its nuts is a safety issue. Should the Commission gave their permission to remove this tree, a tree removal permit would not be needed.

Mr. Carroll noted that the Commission prefers to save trees; however, he understood the safety concerns in this case.

Mr. Torello asked Ms. Dave and Mr. Farkas if the tree was removed, would they want it replaced with a more child-friendly tree.

Ms. Dave asked at this point, that the tree just be removed.

All Commissioners present gave their permission to remove this tree, located between 12 and 15 Sussex Ave. Mr. Torello will schedule a day for the DPW to take the tree down.

On other matters, Susan Anne Chmura and her daughter, Kristy, thanked the Shade Tree Commission for all they've done for the Borough, especially after the heated controversy at last night's Borough Council meeting.

Mr. Carroll noted that it's within the rights of the Mayor and Borough Council to abolish the Shade Tree Commission; however, many benefits and pluses would be lost to the Borough, first instance, helping the Borough obtain Sustainable Jersey certification.

Mr. Carroll cleared up some rumors for Mrs. Chmura about the Lum Ave. tree/commuter parking lot situation.

Mrs. Chmura said she was shocked about the bad communications between the Borough Council and the Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Fekete discussed the problems the Commission has had with their Council Liaison.

Mr. Carroll understood that the ordinance to abolish the Shade Tree Commission will be on the September 28, 2015 Borough Council Agenda. It had been tabled at an earlier meeting.

Mr. Wilson noted that Sam Sealy had suggested establishing a Trust for the Lum Ave. tree.

Mr. Barton asked if there was some other entity, in the State of New Jersey, the Commission could turn to for support.

Ms. Truppo brought up the NJ Shade Tree Federation.

Mr. Boyle questioned what the true motivation was behind removing the Lum Avenue tree.

Mr. Carroll distributed copies of a Google aerial map showing Council Member Lonergan's proposals for a picnic, playground, and athletic field in Lum Field. The tree can still remain with these plans.

Mr. Carroll passed around copies of an article about Old Glory, a giant oak tree in Santa Clarita Valley CA, which was saved by an environmental group SCOPE. He reported that he has received numerous offers of donations from people wanting the Lum Ave. tree to be saved and treated.

Ms. Truppo brought up the idea that someone in a cherry picker could inspect the tree. George Sweetin, a visitor and local landscaper, suggested the Commission have a certified expert do an aerial inspection of the tree. An entire assessment of the tree could be done. Soil samples should also be taken, before any trimming and treatment be undertaken.

Mr. Carroll agreed with Mr. Sweetin's advice, adding that the Commission has received four bids from tree services to look at and treat the tree. Mr. Carroll distributed a memo listing the four interested tree services and their estimates. The scope of their proposed work varied. Mr. Carroll definitely recommended a treatment be done for the tree's ant problem.

Mr. Carroll and Commissioners reviewed the four trees services submitting bids to work on the Lum Ave. tree. They also reviewed what trimming/treatment each tree service offered.

The Commissioners voted in favor of hiring Honor Tree Service to work on the Lum Avenue Tree, including fertilization. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Carroll noted that after the pruning is done, the Commission can determine what further action should be taken on this tree.

Mr. Torello will contact Ernie Nash at Honor Tree Service tomorrow.

Resolution #15-08

Commissioners approved the Shade Tree Commission meeting minutes for July 21, 2015 and August 6, 2015.

Liaison Reports

Borough Council

Council Member Kass was not present to give this report.

Shade Tree Commission Budget

Mr. Carroll reported that at the end of this month, the Commission will have to submit a budget update. Ms. Truppo will work with Mr. Torello this week on this update. Mr. Carroll reminded them that enough money be budgeted for the inspection of Borough trees. Any Borough tree over 30 inches, once every ten years, should be inspected, for safety reasons.

Education Credit Update

Mr. Fekete reported 6 more continuing education credits are still needed for the Commission. Four of these credits must be earned in the classroom.

Bartow Lane Request

Mr. Torello reported that today he had received a call about a Borough oak tree, at 8 Bartow Lane, dropping limbs in a resident's driveway. The resident had asked Mr. Torello to look at the tree. Mr. Torello said he found it to be a substantial tree, with many dead branches. The tips of the branches are bare, indicating that the tree is in decline. There are mushrooms at the base of the tree. Mr. Torello had informed the homeowner that if all the afflicted branches were removed, there won't be much left of the tree.

It was Mr. Torello's opinion that this tree should be taken down. The tree has definite issues. Perhaps the Commissioners would like to drive by and look at the tree themselves before a final decision is made.

Mrs. Chmura said she knew this tree. Its branches are not doing well.

A vote was taken on whether to remove this oak tree at 8 Bartow Lane or not. All Commissioners present voted in favor of removing this tree, except Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson abstained from voting.

Mrs. Truppo confirmed with Mr. Torello that the homeowner was okay with the tree being taken down. The homeowner will be contacting the Commission regarding a replacement tree.

Planting Update

Referring back to the Bartow tree replacement, Mr. Carroll reported that the Commission is running out of budget money to plant new trees. There is only \$7,000 for the Commission's budget for the year. Forty-five trees have been requested. Mr. Carroll isn't sure he can fulfill all these requests at this point. Mr. Carroll agreed to put the Bartow Lane request on the Spring Planting List for 2016.

At 8:40 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary