

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION
Tuesday, July 19, 2016

7:30 p.m.

Chairman Patrick Carroll called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Shade Tree Commission to order at 7:30 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 |
| Thomas Boyle | | X |
| Ken Fekete | X | |
| Christopher Jadro | | X |
| Kristy Chmura | X | |
| Dean Wilson | X | |
| Tony Torello | | X |
| Council Member James Collander | X | |

Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Resolution #16-07

The May 17, 2016 Shade Tree Commission minutes were approved as amended.

Pending Business

Ms. Chmura reported that she had written a letter requesting \$1,000 from the Jaycees seeking to give groups supplemental funding. The Jaycees will be giving the \$1,000 to the STC. Ms. Chmura was unable to attend the Jaycee gathering to officially receive the check. Council Member Collander received the \$1,000 check on behalf of the Commission.

Chrmn. Carroll suggested the Commission create a certificate to present to the Jaycees, thanking them for the generous check.

At this point in the meeting. Robert G. Walton, Area Manager, of External Affairs, JCP & L, arrived at the meeting. He indicated that he was willing to wait his turn to speak at the meeting.

Budget Review

Chrmn. Carroll reported that the Commission has so far spent \$10,000 of its tree-planting budget. There is \$11,000 remaining. With the recent Jaycee donation, the budget is up to \$12,000. At the next Commission meeting, a decision can be made on how much to spend on the fall plantings.

Continuing Education

Mr. Fekete reported that at this point he has received five certificates from Commissioners. Some Commissioners told Mr. Fekete what future classes they would be taking.

Open Space Meeting Update

Chrmn. Carroll reported that some thought had been given to creating a walking trail from Shepard Kollock Park's ballfield on up to the Shunpike. The tract behind the Library, leading up to the backyards of North Hillside Ave., is owned by the Borough. The Open Space Committee had discussed what that land could be used for in the future.

Guest Speaker – Robert G. Walton – JCP & L – Discussion on tree trimming plans

Chrmn. Carroll thanked Mr. Walton for attending tonight's meeting. Chrmn. Carroll noted that a number of residents have expressed concerns about trees being trimmed for power lines. The Commission is curious about the pruning practices of JCP & L for Borough trees, had how aggressive the pruning should be.

Mr. Walton introduced himself. As an area manager of JCP & L he serves as a liaison between JCP & L and area towns, specifically the elected officials. The vegetation management program is within his scope. Mr. Walton noted that there are two types of vegetation: distribution and transmission. He distributed a First Energy leaflet entitled: "Vegetation Management for Distribution Lines" to Commissioners.

Mr. Walton stated that anytime JCP & L is doing a vegetation management program in a community, JCP & L has to notify the community 60 days in advance. An e-mail is sent to the Town Administrator, the Mayor, the Council Members, notifying JCP & L will be coming to their community in two months to

do tree trimming. JCP & L's tree trimming schedule goes by sub-station and by circuit.

Chrmn. Carroll asked if there was any requirement to put in a public notice for these trimmings? Mr. Walton answered that JCP & L does advertise in the newspaper.

Mrs. Drew explained that she has been trying to find out if JCP & L had ever put any wires underground. She had felt that there were many examples in the U.S. where wires had been installed underground, like at Pawley's Island, S.C., Fort Collins, Colorado. Mrs. Drew also wanted to know how much such an installation would cost.

Mr. Walton answered that JCP & L *does* bury its wires. However, it depends on the circumstance. Downtown Morristown has all their wires buried. Downtown Summit has all buried wires. To bury the wires for Downtown Chatham would cost \$2 million. It would be an enormous capital investment for Chatham Borough to take on.

A concern about underground wires, Mr. Walton pointed out that trees also grow underground. When underground service is being installed, trenching and cutting has to be done which may impact the tree roots in a neighborhood.

Mrs. Drew agreed with Mr. Walton's point that underground installation is expensive; however, she felt some people would consider doing it. Mrs. Drew was very concerned about what would happen to the very mature trees in town, when trimming takes place.

Mr. Walton answered that JCP & L would be happy to install the wires underground; however, they would like to have the payment "up front". Mr. Walton agreed to send Mrs. Drew the analysis that JCP & L had done on Main Street, Chatham, for an underground installation.

Mr. Fekete asked if underground wire installation was encouraged when new construction is planned.

Council Member Collander noted that underground wiring is not required in the Borough for new construction.

Mr. Walton discussed the two standards used by JCP & L for trimming around wires. One standard is within the lock-out zone. In the lock-out zone, the BPU requires that trimming must be done 15 feet around the wires from ground to sky. If there is a limb 20 feet above the wires, in the lock-out zone, it is to be trimmed back so it won't be hanging over the wires.

Mr. Walton explained the new standard developed after Hurricane Sandy between the BPU and the League of Municipalities. Mr. Walton stated that when JCP & L needs to prune, they try to understand the aesthetics. He brought up the V-shape that some trees have, where the middle is hollowed out. Mr. Walton explained such a V-shape is healthier for the long term life of the tree.

Mr. Walton pointed out that JCP & L is always willing to remove a tree entirely, if it would be more preferable than a trim. Whoever owns the tree makes the decision to take it down. JCP & L has a right to trim around its wires. Chrmn. Carroll and Council Member Collander felt that the Shade Tree Commission should be making the ultimate decision to take down a tree if it's in the Borough right-of-way.

Commissioners confirmed with Mr. Walton that JCP & L trims within a 15 ft. circumference around a wire.

Mrs. Drew will e-mail Mr. Walton a letter stating the BPU exception for healthy trees.

Chrmn. Carroll discussed the tree stump situation with Mr. Walton. Mr. Walton stated that JCP & L work crews do not bring equipment to grind the stump, nor to haul away the wood.

Mr. Walton noted that every four years every substation and its circuits get trimmed. Mr. Walton described JCP & L's three-spaced cable system.

Mrs. Drew wanted to know what were the lock-out zones for Chatham Borough. Ms. Chmura suggested that a map be given to the Shade Tree Commission for when they plant trees. Mr. Walton noted that Assistant Borough Administrator Steve Williams has the maps showing JCP & L's circuits in Chatham Borough. For security reasons, only Mr. Williams should have this map showing circuits. However, Mr. Walton can provide the Commission with a shaded overlay of the lock-out zones.

Council Member Collander confirmed with Mr. Walton that JCP & L has four lock-out coming out of Trainer.

Chrmn. Carroll asked if there were setback requirements for the installation of telephone poles. He didn't want people trying to plant trees to camouflage the telephone poles.

Mr. Walton answered that there are no recommendations on setbacks of poles.

Mrs. Drew reminded Mr. Walton to send the Commission information on the lock-out zones and the tree-trimming schedule for Chatham Borough.

The Commission thanked Mr. Walton for his presentation.

Tree Ordinance

Mrs. Drew distributed copies of information regarding tree removal ordinances from nearby communities. Also, Mrs. Drew had noted down information from the Laws for New Jersey Trees, from the NJ Shade Tree Foundation, regarding tree removal.

Mrs. Drew felt the following communities had excellent tree ordinances: Millburn, Maplewood, Summit, Montclair, Berkeley Heights, and Jackson Township.

Mrs. Drew suggested that she and some additional Commissioners prepare a presentation to the Mayor and Council explaining the importance of having a tree ordinance to protect public and private trees. Mrs. Drew has heard that Borough Attorney Lott and Borough Administrator Falzarano have been given the task of working on this ordinance. Mrs. Drew was not happy to hear this.

Council Member Collander noted that Borough Attorney Lott has to return to the Borough Council with recommendations to align this tree ordinance properly to what he is tasked to do. He suggested Attorney Lott give his presentation to the Mayor and Borough Council, who will review it.

Chrmn. Carroll pointed out to Mrs. Drew that Attorney Lott is looking at requirements, like those specified in the Jackson Twp. tree ordinance, to establish a fee to pay for CTE inspections.

After further discussion, Chrmn. Carroll could create a one-page document recommending that an application process and a fee. The fee will be used to pay for CTE inspections, etc.

Council Member Collander said he would give the tree ordinance examples to Attorney Lott to review. Chrmn. Carroll confirmed with Mrs. Drew that Millburn, Maplewood, Summit, etc. were, in her opinion, the best practices for tree ordinances.

Summing up, Chrmn. Carroll asked Mrs. Drew, with one or two other Commissioners, formulate what they feel should be in the tree ordinance. The recommendations from Mrs. Drew's committee could be matched up with what material Attorney Lott comes up with.

On other matters, Ms. Chmura brought up a concern expressed by her neighbor, Mrs. Conlan. Mrs. Conlan had asked if there were any rules safeguarding trees while construction is going on. She has noticed dirt piled up against trees while construction is going on.

Mr. Fekete pointed out that special fencing is usually put around trees while construction is going on. The ordinance requires this fencing be in place. The Construction Official should be keeping an eye on that situation when he inspects.

Mrs. Chmura noted another concern of Mrs. Conlan's was that too much mulch was being deposited around local trees. This is not healthy for the tree trunk. Mrs. Conlan had asked if something could be put in the newspapers warning residents to ease up on this mulching. Chrmn. Carroll pointed out that he had also observed this unfortunate practice.

Chrmn. Carroll, with information from Ms. Chmura, will generate a write-up as a press release on the Borough website. Council Member Collander suggested a presentation at a future Council meeting. Ms. Chmura agreed with these suggestions. Council Member Collander will arrange to have this presentation on one of the September Council Meeting's agenda.

At 9:03 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2016, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary