

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

7:30 p.m.

Chairwoman Colleen Truppo called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Shade Tree Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. in Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Borough Hall. The Open Public Meetings statement was read aloud.

Name	Present	Absent
Chrmn. Colleen Truppo	X	
Christopher Jadro		X
Fran Drew	X	
Ken Fekete	X	
Dean Wilson		X
Kristy Chmura	X	
Ken Chmura	X	
Thaddeus Kobylarz	X	
Tony Torello	X	
Council Member James Collander	X	

Also in attendance was Bill Heap, a representative from the Chatham Jaycees.

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Drew made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of November 21, 2017 as amended. Ms. Chmura seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The meeting minutes of November 21, 2017 were approved.

Discussion Items

Jaycee grant

Chrwmn. Truppo welcomed Mr. Heap. She noted that the Chatham Jaycees, has given support towards the planting of trees in the town. Chrwmn. Truppo stated Mr. Heap attended a recent Council Meeting where he had discussed the Jaycees funding a grant that would allow homeowners to submit requests for tree plantings on their properties.

Chrwmn. Truppo recalled back in September, the Shade Tree Commission had approached the Borough Council for a separate budget for residents to make contributions towards Shade Tree plantings. If the Borough Council approved such a budget, the State would still have to review it. Chrwmn. Truppo pointed out that right now, the Shade Tree Commission doesn't have the ability to receive private funds. Once the Shade Tree does have the ability to accept these funds, they could accept donations from the Jaycees; however, the STC couldn't stipulate that the homeowners would plant the tree on their private properties. The money could also be used to plant trees on public property.

Chrwmn. Truppo felt that there were plenty of opportunities for tree plantings around town. Maybe the Jaycee grant could be used for plantings in a public place in town, if the Jaycees approved.

Ms. Chmura suggested plantings could be done in Memorial Park, close to the Library.

Mr. Heap and the Commissioners reviewed the current process taken when residents ask for trees to be planted on their properties.

Mr. Fekete told Mr. Heap that when it comes to funds coming in, instead of depositing them in the general treasury, the STC could look into keeping those particular funds separate, and dedicating them to Shade Tree Commission items.

Mr. Chmura recommended that the Jaycee grant should go towards what the STC is trying to accomplish as a Shade Tree Commission.

After further discussion, Chrwmn. Truppo confirmed with Mr. Heap that the STC could then decide on how to spend the Jaycee grant, so long as the money is used for shade tree plantings. The locations for these plantings will be decided in the future.

Mr. Heap reported that the Jaycee's donation cycle starts in February/March. He asked that a representative from the Shade Tree Commission attend the Jaycee's annual dinner to receive the donation check.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Heap for this wonderful grant.

Mr. Heap departed.

Commissioners discussed the recent STC tree plantings done for Borough homeowners. Chwmn. Truppo suggested the Commission do a follow-up with the homeowners in the Spring and give them gator-bags. The homeowners, at this point, do not have to follow any caretaking tips for their trees.

Mr. Chmura asked if the Commission was keeping track of the species of trees being planted and where. Chrwmn. Truppo answered yes.

Tree Ordinance

Chrwmn. Truppo reported that the STC has committed a budget line item related to legal costs for the tree ordinance. She noted that STC has jurisdiction over public trees. The Borough will have jurisdiction over private trees. However, an official document, an ordinance, is needed to decide what will happen for both public and private trees.

Chrwmn. Truppo also reported that Councilman Collander, Mr. Linson, Mr. Torello, Mr. Williams and Mr. DeNave have been working months crafting the language for the tree

ordinance. She stressed that there has been a great deal of activity regarding this ordinance. She clarified that it was not her document, and it shouldn't have been given out.

Councilman Collander gave an update on the proposed ordinance. Attorney Lott is no longer being sought for this matter. A presentation to the public will be given regarding this ordinance at a future Council meeting, hopefully at the end of January. The next Borough Council meeting is the Reorganization Meeting on January 2nd.

Mrs. Drew offered comments on the document entitled "Tree Canopy Update" she had received at the last meeting. Mrs. Drew had given Chrwmn. Truppo and the Borough Administrator copies of the six tree ordinances from neighboring towns. Mrs. Drew did not see any input from these ordinances in this document. Referring to STC minutes of 2017, Mrs. Drew noted that Councilman Collander had informed her that an outline of the tree ordinance had been done, however it was too late in the calendar year for the Borough Council to consider adopting this ordinance. It is better that this proposed ordinance be introduced in the first quarter of the new year, 2018.

Mrs. Drew pointed out that nothing had been said in the "Tree Canopy Update" about the six towns who have legal ordinances regarding private trees. The year 2018 will mark five years that the Commission has been working on this ordinance for public and private trees.

Mrs. Drew suggested that a small group of Shade Tree Commissioners form a subcommittee to organize a thoughtful, well-organized presentation to educate the public on the tree ordinances from these six neighboring towns.

Councilman Collander believed that private trees had been referenced in the proposed ordinance. He felt Mrs. Drew's document and the Borough's document will come close in agreement.

Chrwmn. Truppo noted that the Commission's accountability is for public trees, not private trees.

Mrs. Drew asked Councilman Collander if the Mayor and Borough Council had received these tree ordinances from the six towns.

Councilman Collander answered yes.

Mrs. Drew then concluded that the Shade Tree Commission will just be in charge of public trees, which it always has been. And maybe sometime in the distant future, someone in the Borough will be in charge of private trees.

Councilman Collander noted that currently the appeal process for trees goes to the Borough Council. The Borough Council currently decides on private trees.

Mrs. Drew asked Councilman Collander if the Borough Council had received the tree ordinance drafted by the Shade Tree Commission a while back.

Councilman Collander wasn't sure the Borough Council had received this particular document. He had received copies from Mrs. Drew.

Councilman Collander felt that a great deal of progress had been made on the draft ordinance worked on by the subcommittee of himself, Mr. Torello, Mr. Linson, Mr. DeNave, Borough Administrator Williams.

Mrs. Drew asked if the Shade Tree Commission will be able to see the proposed ordinance before it is introduced at the Borough Council meeting.

Councilman Collander answered no. The Borough Council will first see the ordinance at their public meeting. Anybody can attend that meeting.

Chrwmn. Truppo noted that the tree ordinances from the six neighboring towns were very useful to refer to. She pointed out that currently Chatham Borough does not have an ordinance that protects all of the Borough trees adequately. If someone were to give the Shade Tree Commission actual control over local private trees, it would entail a huge administrative process.

Councilman Collander asked the Commissioners if they trusted John Linson, the Borough Arborist.

Commissioners indicated they did. Councilman Collander pointed out that Mr. Linson felt the draft ordinance was a good document. Councilman Collander stated that an effort was also made to create an ordinance that both the residents and the Borough government could deal with.

Mrs. Drew felt that if the residents learned about the tree ordinances in these six neighboring towns, they would also discover that these towns have wonderful tree canopies. Mrs. Drew believed the residents in these towns were not fighting their tree ordinances either.

Councilman Collander and Ms. Chmura discussed the recent tree removal action at 74 Fairview Avenue. Councilman Collander felt that if a situation like that were to happen again, severe consequences would result. He also pointed out that the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment will have to conform to the tree ordinance.

Ms. Chmura felt confident that this ordinance will strengthen the Commission's care for the town trees and wildlife. She definitely wants this ordinance to be adopted.

Councilman Collander reminded the Commission that the Borough Council has not yet seen this proposed ordinance. The Borough Council will be different in the new year. Two long-time Councilmen have stepped down. Two new Councilmen will be taking their place.

Councilman Collander will notify Chrwmn. Truppo when the ordinance will be on the Borough Council Agenda. So far, he believed it would be on the Council's Agenda for January 22nd. Chrwmn. Truppo will keep Commissioners posted on what Council Meeting it will be scheduled.

Mr. Chmura brought up a recent State law that requires every tree service company must have an employee who is a licensed tree expert.

Mr. Torello noted that licensed tree experts are supposed to register with the Borough.

Mr. Kobylarz asked how would this tree ordinance, if approved, would be enforced. (I couldn't hear an answer – sorry – too many voices).

Mr. Fekete noted that people have pointed out that the current tree ordinance doesn't work. He would like to know what doesn't work in the ordinance.

Mr. Drew recalled that the Commission was informed by Attorney Lott that the reason the current tree ordinance didn't work was because there were discrepancies between the current ordinance and the land use ordinance.

Councilman Collander pointed out that what was done in the past is over. A clean slate will be starting with this new proposed ordinance. This new ordinance is similar to what the surrounding towns have in place.

Councilman Collander said he will do a power-point presentation at the Council Meeting when this ordinance is under discussion. The team – Mr. Torello, Mr. DeNave, Mr. Linson, and Borough Administrator Williams – all who have been working on this ordinance, will be sitting at the front table to answer any questions. There is a good chance that there will be more of a public turnout at the ordinance's second reading.

Councilman Collander and the Commissioners discussed how the Planning Board and Zoning Board seriously consider each tree on properties presenting applications. Mr. Torello said that in the future, if this ordinance was approved, these trees being proposed for removal in an application would be reviewed by him.

Mrs. Drew suggested that Diane Conlan and others who have expressed serious concerns about tree removal should be invited to hear this presentation to the Borough Council. Commissioners agreed with this suggestion.

After further discussion, Councilman Collander recommended that the Commission show a united front when this presentation is given to the Mayor and Council.

Mrs. Drew suggested that in 2018, the Commission should discuss the issue of underground wiring for Chatham Borough. This would be a big benefit for the health of our local trees.

Mrs. Drew reported that she had contacted Brian Mallin, the Chrmn. of the Manasquan Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Mallin cannot attend any Chatham Shade Tree Commission at night. He can attend daytime meetings in Chatham or the Chatham Commissioners can visit him in Manasquan at some agreed-upon time.

At 9:06 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, upper level, Chatham Borough Hall. This will be the Shade Tree Commission's Reorganization Meeting for 2018.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Minutes Secretary