

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

7:30 p.m.

Chairman 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 Collander		X

A legal quorum was present at this meeting.

Public Comment

There was none.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of September 19, 2017 were approved as amended.

New Business

Follow-up from STC Presentation to the Mayor and Borough Council

Chrmn. Truppo felt that, over-all, the presentation had been well received. She had included Mr. Fekete's suggestion requesting that the budget rider become more inclusive, not just involve the tree plantings. The newspapers and Tap into Chatham had articles about the Commission's presentation. Residents submitted comments on-line about the presentation. Many of them are upset about all the construction going on, removing many trees.

Chrmn. Truppo said that the goal of the presentation was to educate the public making them aware of the tree situation in the Borough. She noted that the Borough Council had questions about trees on private property. Chrmn. Truppo recalled that the Borough Attorney, James Lott reported at that meeting that he and Council Member Collander have been working on the draft of the tree ordinance.

Referring to the minutes at the last meeting, Mrs. Drew asked if Council Member Collander will be concentrating, in the new quarter, on changes to the public tree ordinance?

Chrmn. Truppo believed that Council Member Collander meant that the Borough Council will undertake a review of ordinances regarding private trees. However, the control of private trees will remain with the Borough Council, not the Shade Tree Commission.

Mrs. Drew and Ms. Chmura felt that the majority of the Shade Tree Commission were in favor of control over private trees.

Chrmn. Truppo clarified that what Council Member Collander and Attorney Lott are proposing for private trees will be similar to other municipalities, such as Summit and Maplewood, where a certified tree expert would be retained to review all tree permits. Tree service vendors would have to be licensed before any private trees were removed.

Mr. Kobylarz asked, in regard to the regulatory framework being considered, how close was it to what exists in other municipalities like Summit.

Chrmn. Truppo believed that homeowners, as well as the Borough Council, should really be engaged with this tree removal issue.

Mr. Kobylarz asked Chrmn. Truppo what was her perception from the Borough Council after giving her presentation.

Chrmn. Truppo felt that none of the Council Members were anti-tree. She believed that the Commission had to do whatever was possible to save the Borough's tree canopy, which has been disappearing over time. Chrmn. Truppo was willing to allow some entities to have control over some tree removals, if it would help this tree canopy crisis.

Mr. Kobylarz reminded Commissioners that the STC Commission has, in its favor, its Commission name and its long history, dating back to 1909. The Commission has the authority to raise red flags on certain issues.

For the STC Budget submission for the coming year, Chrmn. Truppo wanted a definite discussion on legal time. For their budget, Commissioners should stress that they wanted dedicated legal time for this tree ordinance issue.

Mrs. Drew asked if the draft ordinance that Council Member Collander and Attorney Lott are working on, be emailed to Commissioners to study over before their next meeting. Chrmn. Truppo said she would try and do this.

Ms. Chmura said she realized the length of time it can take to accomplish things in government, like this ordinance. She sympathized with Mrs. Drew's frustrations. However, Ms. Chmura recommended that a spirit of cooperation be maintained among Commissioners. She did not want to see an implosion occur among the Commissioners.

Relating to this topic, Chrmn. Truppo reported that Morris Township NJ is removing all of their ash trees because of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) disease. John Linson, the Chatham Borough

arborist, has informed Chrmn. Truppo that the Borough will probably be losing some of their ash trees, not because of EAB, but because of a yellow ash problem.

Tree Planting Update

Chrmn. Truppo brought up a suggestion made by Mr. Linson, that the Commission could plant new ash trees to replace any Borough ash trees which have to be removed. Mr. Linson recommended that the new tree should be planted in the exact spot of the old tree, to avoid the underground utility lines on the public right-of-way.

Ms. Chmura suggested an Adopt-a-Tree program or fund for these replacement trees. The Commission could set up a table could at the Farmers Market to give out information on how residents could help with tree replacements. Chrmn. Truppo added that residents should be reminded of the shrinking tree canopy in the Borough. Maybe a program regarding this concern could be called "Look Up".

Mrs. Drew discussed the problem of trees being severely trimmed by JCP & L and BPU. She suggested that the Commission explore this concern more fully in the future. Mrs. Drew noted that she had inquired of JCP & L how much it would cost to install wires underground. JCP & L had informed her that it would cost millions of dollars; however, they could not give a more specific figure. Perhaps a presentation can be given to the Borough Council on what has been happening to Borough trees because of wiring not being installed underground. Mrs. Drew was sure there was a way to install the wiring underground, at a reasonable cost.

2018 Goal Planning

Chrmn. Truppo strongly recommended that the Commission apply for a grant. She pointed out that the NJDEP and the Department of Forestry have offered grants recently to other municipalities.

Mrs. Drew noted that Brian Mowen had just been awarded two grants, at \$30,000 each, for the Manasquan Shade Tree Commission. She will ask Mr. Mowen for copies of the two proposals that he had written for these grants.

Chrmn. Truppo reviewed some of the expenditures of the past budget.

Tree proposals for 74 Fairview Avenue

Commissioners reviewed the proposed landscape plans that the builder had submitted to Vince DeNave, the Borough Engineer and Zoning Official. The DPW reported that currently, at 74 Fairview Ave., 5 trees are in the Borough Right-of-Way. Chrmn. Truppo noted that the builder had informed Mr. DeNave that these five trees are in the way of his construction plans.

Chrmn. Truppo had visited the site this morning and believed these five trees to be mature and in good health. She had then asked Mr. Torello, Director of the DPW, to look at these trees and see if there were any concerns about their health. Mr. Torello believed that the trees were healthy. Chrmn. Truppo asked Commissioners if Mr. Linson, the Borough Arborist, should be asked to give his opinion of the health of these five trees.

After further discussion, Mrs. Drew made a motion that the Shade Tree Commission not allow any action be taken on these five trees until they are evaluated by a certified tree expert. Mr. Fekete seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Chrmn. Truppo will contact Mr. Linson tomorrow morning about this evaluation.

CEU credits

Chrmn. Truppo urged Commissioners to obtain their CEU credits. At least eight credits are needed. She asked Commissioners to email her when a CEU is obtained.

Before adjourning, Mr. Fekete asked what was the status of the tree and sidewalk situation on Watchung Ave. and Lafayette Ave. There had been some question of whether this situation was on Chatham Township or Borough property. Was it ever resolved?

Mrs. Drew answered no. She explained that Lafayette Ave., mostly on the southern side, belongs to Chatham Township. The Township wanted to install additional sidewalks, which would eliminate 12 to 15 mature trees. The grant obtained for this project was not implemented in a timely manner. Mrs. Drew believed the project was now in "no man's land". She felt that the sidewalks should not be put in.

Mrs. Drew and Ms. Chmura recalled that there is a mature scarlet oak tree that they believed was on Borough property. The Township disagreed, sending a property survey proving that the tree is on Township property by a tiny amount. Former STC Chairman Pat Carroll had urged that the Borough Shade Tree Commission to have another survey be done to show which municipality the tree belonged to. Mrs. Drew believed this survey was never done. She suggested an independent surveyor be hired to do this survey.

Chrmn. Truppo will ask Mr. DeNave about a possible survey.

At 8:55 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Borough Shade Tree Commission will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary