

# Borough of Chatham Annual Report 2014 Shade Tree Commission

## Summary

Below are highlights from the year:

- Planted a total of 68 trees in the Borough
- Named a permanent Chairman, Ken Fekete
- Added 1 new member and 2 alternate members to the commission
- Restructured roles within the commission
- Improved public outreach and awareness

## 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 Ken Fekete and the Commission Secretary is Patrick Carroll. 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. 2014 saw fewer major weather events than the preceding years (Hurricanes Sandy and Irene, October snow storms). However, forty-eight inches of snow and routine aging led to removals and pruning. DPW or its contractor removed 54 trees and JCP&L removed another 6 for a total loss of 60 Trees.

	2012	2013	2014	Change From Previous Year
Pruned In House	246	57	73	28%
Removed In House	95	36	34	-6%

Trees Contracted Pruning	<b>39</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-8%</b>
Trees Contracted for Removal	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33%</b>
Trees Removed by JCP&L	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-67%</b>
Trees Pruned By JCP&L	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	
Stumps Ground	<b>76</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-38%</b>

## 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.

Thanks again to a renewed grant from the Chatham Jaycees, we were able to plant 70 new trees in the spring and fall of 2014. In an effort to simplify the process, this year the Commission solicited quotes from local contractors to supply and plant the trees.

## Budget

In 2014 Shade Tree Expenses were:

Description	Amount
<b>Planting</b>	<b>\$20,285.00</b>
<b>Dues</b>	<b>\$260.00</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>\$226.04</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,771.04</b>

## **Tree City USA Certification**

In 2014 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 five regular meeting during 2014 on the third Tuesday every other month, starting in January. Meetings are held in Borough Hall, and published for the public to attend. The 2015 meeting schedule is as follows:

January 20, March 17, May 19, July 21, September 15 and November 17.

## **2015 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 75 trees for Borough residents
- Improve processes
- Improve use of technology