

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION
 Tuesday, September 19, 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 – present by speaker phone	
Ken Fekete	X	
Dean Wilson	X	
Kristy Chmura	X	
Ken Chmura	X	
Thaddeus Kobylarz		X
Tony Torello	X	
Council Member James Collander	X	

Also present was Robin R. Kline, Municipal Clerk of Chatham Borough.

Public Comments

Craig Veilguth, 5 Dunbar St., noted that a year or so ago, the DPW had removed a street tree close to his home that was in dangerous condition. He understood that a new tree will be planted to replace this removed tree. Chrmn. Truppo confirmed that Mr. Veilguth that he is on the Commission’s waiting list for a new street tree.

Mr. Veilguth reported that since the time the first street tree was taken down, the DPW has taken down a second street tree on the public right-of-way near his home. He distributed photos of the area where the trees had been removed, showing the sparseness. Mr. Veilguth stated that a replacement of the larger of the two trees would be a great improvement.

Chrmn. Truppo informed him that it would be fine for him to return to the waiting list for a new tree.

Mr. Veilguth stated that he will send in the necessary paperwork for the new tree request. He thanked the Commissioners for all their work.

The Commissioners briefly discussed the unhealthy condition of certain street trees in the Roosevelt Ave. area.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of August 15, 2017 were approved as submitted.

New Business

Invited Speaker: Robin R. Kline, Borough Clerk

Chrmn. Truppo introduced Ms. Kline.

Ms. Kline reported that the Tree Request Form has now been updated. This new form can be filled out by residents for both street tree evaluations and for requests for street tree plantings. Ms. Kline pointed out that there is now a check-off box on this form for residents opting to donate a tree(s) themselves.

Ms. Kline discussed the new permit form for Tree Removal on private properties. These two new forms are available on the Borough website for residents to fill out and submit it directly to the Borough offices. These submissions will be acknowledged and forwarded on to the correct entities. Ms. Kline explained how the tracking list of these Tree Service Request Forms function in the Borough Clerk's Office.

Ms. Kline showed Commissioners the first Shade Tree Commission minutes book starting from the late 1890s. The first Shade Tree Commission meeting was held on March 29, 1897. On May 3, 1909, Mayor Frank Kelley appointed the first three Shade Tree Commissioners.

Ms. Kline noted that in 1959 the Shade Tree Commission was now appointed by Borough ordinance. She showed the original typed-up ordinance, signed by then Borough Clerk John Mowen and Mayor James Henderson.

Ms. Kline pointed out that what started out in 1909 as a Mayoral-appointed Shade Tree Commission membership, for a five-year term, has moved on to a Commission consisting of seven regular members, two alternate members, appointed by the Mayor, and serving five year terms.

Ms. Kline stated that the roster of membership of Commissioners omits personal information, like addresses and phone numbers, from the Borough website and other public postings. She explained the volunteer application which can be submitted by any interested resident who would like to serve on a Borough Board or Commission. Ms. Kline noted that a Municipal Clerk takes receipt of these applications, after they are filled out, and submits them to the Mayor and Town Council for their consideration. She explained how a Commission/Board would deal with a member's unexplained absences at meetings.

Ms. Kline distributed copies of a print-out: "A Guide to the New Jersey Sunshine Law". She reminded Commissioners that members of the public have the right to attend Commission meetings and observe proceedings.

Ms. Kline discussed the Borough's budget process. She reminded Commissioners that their Commission budget is due November 1st. Council Member Collander also reminded Commissioners that they are an independent community body. Ms. Kline noted that the Borough Shade Tree Commission has a very large allocation for their annual budget. Any legal fees the Commissioners may incur, comes out of their budget. She reminded Commissioners to keep in mind their goals and objectives when preparing their annual budgets.

Answering an inquiry from Mr. Fekete, Ms. Kline explained how a commission would handle extensive legal fees, which nowadays is very difficult.

The Commissioners and Ms. Kline discussed possible trust funds that could be organized for Shade Trees.

Ms. Kline also discussed with Commissioners their current project of reviewing their Shade Commission Chapter. She reviewed with Commissioners the ordinance process followed by the Borough Council. Ms. Kline reminded Commissioners that ordinances have to be introduced and adopted on the same calendar year. They cannot be carried over into the new year.

Council Member Collander and Ms. Kline discussed the fee process, answering an inquiry from Mr. Chmura.

Mr. Fekete brought up that some Boards have the authority to take down trees without consulting the Shade Tree Commission. Where do these Boards get their authority?

Ms. Kline and Council Member Collander answered that State law gives them this authority. However, Council Member Collander pointed out that on plans before the Planning Bd. and Zoning Bd., each tree to be removed will be discussed by the Board.

Mrs. Drew pointed out that the Jackson Township ordinance has excellent language on how to deal with tree removals by developers on private property. She strongly recommended that the Shade Tree Commission concentrate on getting the Shade Tree ordinance finalized. It will then solve a lot of problems. Mrs. Drew noted that the Borough of Madison has a beautiful tree canopy.

Ms. Kline stated that Madison Borough has resources that Chatham Borough does not have, when it comes to trees.

Mrs. Drew strongly believed that if the Shade Tree ordinance was adopted by the Borough Council, it would make Chatham Borough more beautiful than it already is.

Council Member Collander informed Mrs. Drew that an outline of the tree ordinance has been done. Chrmn. Truppo has seen it. It's too late in the calendar year of 2017, for the Borough Council to consider this proposed ordinance. It can be moved forward in the first quarter of the new year.

Mr. Chmura referred the Commissioners to the Tree Service Request Form. He suggested another box for check off be added, asking of the applicant would be willing to donate a tree, even if one is not removed.

Before departing the meeting, Ms. Kline distributed flyers asking people to consider working as poll workers on election days. There is a serious need for these workers.

2018 Annual Budget

Chrmn. Truppo reported that she had met with Mr. Day, the Borough CFO, since the last Commission meeting. Mr. Day had given her a copy of what the Commission's budget was to date. The total amount is about \$27,000. The biggest amount, \$22,000, is for plantings. In 2017, the treatment for ash trees is zero amount.

Mr. Torello and Council Member Collander discussed how the ash tree situation

could be handled in the future. Council Member Collander pointed out that it was expensive to take the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infected trees down. Mr. Torello recommended that the tree removal and new plantings should occur at the same time. Chrmn. Truppo reviewed the recommendations made by Mr. Linson, the Borough Arborist. Mr. Linson recommended that EAB treatments be included in the Commission's 2018 Budget. Mr. Torello suggested that Mr. Linson be asked to mark trees that should be removed, and the process of replanting can begin. Council Member Collander noted that there isn't money in the Commission's budget for plantings.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of obtaining a grant for EAB treatment. Chrmn. Truppo suggested that a Commissioner work with Janice Piccolo, the Grants Coordinator, in researching and applying for such a grant. Unfortunately, the deadline for grants like this are in March.

Summing up, Mr. Torello stated that he will contact John Linson to look at the local ash trees again.

Interfaith Green Circle of Chatham & Summit

Chrmn. Truppo reported that Kathy Abbott, from St. Patrick Church, had heard about the Commission's presentation at the summer camp at St. Paul's Church. Chrmn. Truppo noted that many local churches would also like to promote environmental awareness.

Chrmn. Truppo reported that she had discussed with Ms. Abbott the Arbor Day Concert that had been held at St. Patrick. Perhaps, in the future, some tree-related activities for the youngsters could follow the concert. Ms. Chmura felt that it was important to educate the young people about caring for the environment.

Council Member Collander suggested that the Scouts be asked to help keep the gator bags watered for recently planted trees in the Borough. Commissioners felt that was a good idea.

Windshield Survey & Planting Update

Chrmn. Truppo reported that the purchase order for the Windshield Survey was done in early August. Mr. Torello noted that Mr. Linson is currently working on this survey.

Presentation to the Borough Council

Chrmn. Truppo reported that she will be giving the Shade Tree presentation at the October 11th Borough Council meeting. She will report that the Borough has lost a number of trees. Chrmn. Truppo will stress that larger trees will be planted, not smaller ornamental trees. Larger trees have a better chance at surviving.

Mr. Torello suggested Chrmn. Truppo mention to residents that they can purchase their own trees to plant on their properties.

Chrmn. Truppo also will use information from an article reporting the monetary value of a tree to the town.

Chrmn. Truppo stated that on behalf of the Commission, she could ask the Borough Council if the Council could consider creation of a budget rider so that the Commission can accept donations. Chrmn. Truppo asked Commissioners to contribute any further thoughts they may have for this presentation as soon as possible.

Volunteer Opportunities

Chrmn. Truppo gave an update on Paul Kleinhelder's application to join the Commission.

Mr. Fekete and Council Member discussed concerns about the length of time it takes for a volunteer application to be approved by the Mayor.

Miscellaneous

Chrmn. Truppo discussed the NJ Shade Tree Commission Conference to be held October 19th and 20th. Chrmn. Truppo noted that she plans on attending the Friday session. She asked Commissioners to let her know if they are interested in attending, and on what dates, so reservations/payments can be processed. Chrmn. Truppo noted that Mrs. Drew usually attends this conference.

Council Member Collander reported that some e-mails have been received questioning the need for the fence around the Scarlet Oak tree in Lum Field, close to Borough Hall. He recalled that the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) had wanted the fence to be put up based on some information that they had received. The Borough Council has asked Mr. Linson, the Borough Arborist, what his opinion was on this matter. In his reply, Mr. Linson felt that the fence was not necessary. Council Member Collander said he will reserve his own opinion on this matter.

Council Member Collander read aloud the opinion of David McHale, Public Sector Risk Control Director at JIF. It was Mr. McHale's opinion that recreation or other activities could be conducted under or in close proximity to the tree. Mr. McHale recommended that a professional opinion, in writing, be obtained stating that it is safe for the public to be under the tree while taking the fence down.

After further discussion by the Commission, Ms. Chmura made a motion that the Commission believes the best idea is to keep the fence around the Scarlet Oak. Ms. Truppo seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The motion was approved.

At 9:43 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 7:30 p.m. Commissioners will be notified of the meeting room.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary