

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 15, 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 – present by conference call	
Ken Chmura	X	
Thaddeus Kobylarz		X
Tony Torello		X
Council Member James Collander		X

Also present was a concerned resident, Andrea Skarra, 26 Orchard Road.

Public Comments

Andrea Skarra, 26 Orchard Rd., reported on a tree across the street from her residence that she believed is 25% over the right-of-way line. It is an older white oak tree. The branches are overhanging the street. Ms. Skarra believed that this tree is a public hazard. It may also affect the safety of her home. Ms. Skarra then called the arborist from the Borough of Madison. He came out and inspected the tree. He felt that the tree, for the time being, “will hold”. He had found sections of dead wood on the tree. Also, some of the branches of the canopy needed to be trimmed back to help with the tree’s balance.

Ms. Skarra asked if there was any way in which the Borough could help with the pruning of this tree. Commissioners confirmed with her that the tree was located at 25 Orchard Rd. Chrmn. Truppo suggested that Director Torello, of the DPW, check to see if the tree is technically located in the public right-of-way and if it could be pruned by the Borough. If the tree is technically on a neighbor’s property, the Borough can’t do any work on it.

Commissioners suggested that Ms. Skarra ask the DPW to have a look at the tree in question. Ms. Skarra agreed to fill out and submit the Tree Service Request Form on the Borough website.

Motion to Adopt Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the June 20, 2017 STC meeting were approved as amended.

Discussion Items

Update on the ordinance

Chrmn. Truppo reported on a meeting she had been invited to attend regarding the ordinance. Acting Administrator Steve Williams, Council Member Collander, DPW Director Tony Torello and Chrmn. Truppo had listened to a power-presentation by Borough Attorney James Lott on the work he has done so far on the ordinance.

Chrmn. Truppo expressed appreciation to Mrs. Drew and Ms. Chmura for all the research and information they had provided on tree ordinances from neighboring towns.

Chrmn. Truppo recalled that Atty Lott's presentation at this meeting contained many of the points and suggestions raised by these neighboring towns. Penalties for illegally removing a tree, permit process for removing trees, requirements for tree companies working on private properties, donations for replanting trees, etc. were among the topics reviewed at this meeting.

Chrmn. Truppo discussed Attorney Lott's fees for advising on this ordinance. She pointed out that Attorney Lott has many other Borough projects that he has to work on.

Mrs. Drew pointed out that Attorney Lott was approached four years ago to help with this ordinance. She felt he hadn't done anything since. She suggested a meeting be held with the Mayor or the Borough CFO to see where to go from here.

Chrmn. Truppo noted that at times the Borough Council has to discuss and vote on federal or state ordinance requirements ahead of local matters, like the tree ordinance.

Mrs. Drew asked if she could have a copy of the Municipal Budget. She didn't want this matter delayed any further. Chrmn. Truppo offered to send copies of the budget to Commissioners. She reported that she has invited Robin Kline, the Borough Clerk, to attend the next Shade Tree Commission meeting, to discuss procedures like this.

Mrs. Drew felt that the Commission could give the proposed ordinance they had worked on to Attorney Lott. He can then give his feedback, or choose a tree ordinance from one of the neighboring towns.

Mr. Fekete believed that the Commission should at least be told where this tree ordinance sits on Attorney Lott's list of projects to be done.

Chrmn. Truppo felt that Ms. Kline, the Borough Clerk, could give the Commission a sense of where this proposed ordinance is on the Borough Council's docket.

Mrs. Drew noted that she has to meet with Tim Day, the Borough CFO, tomorrow on another matter. She will ask him for a copy of the Borough's budget.

Ms. Chmura suggested that the Commission ask to give a presentation to the Borough Council on what they are trying to achieve with this proposed ordinance and what has been done so far by the Commission. The public also would be then be made aware of the Commission's concerns

on tree removal and the work that is being done. Chrmn. Truppo and Mrs. Drew approved of this suggestion.

Ms. Chmura had to sign off. It was 8 p.m. at this point in the meeting. She informed the Commission that she will make sure to attend the September 19th STC meeting in person.

Mr. Chmura recommended that Chrmn. Truppo ask to be included on a Borough Council agenda for September to give the presentation as discussed tonight. Chrmn. Truppo agreed to move ahead with this suggestion.

Fall Planting

Chrmn. Truppo reported that about 25 residents have requested tree plantings so far. She noted that last year the Commission's tree planting budget was \$2909. Additional money had been left over with the DPW doing an excellent job with the Emerald Ash Borer Treatment done in the Borough. Last year 104 trees were planted in the Borough. Chrmn. Truppo noted that many of these trees were ornamental trees, not shade trees. She felt that the Commission should focus on increasing the tree canopy in the Borough. Ornamental trees do not accomplish that goal. Ms. Kline, the Borough Clerk, will be putting helpful information on the Borough website listing which trees would be best for residents to plant in the Borough.

Chrmn. Truppo didn't feel as many trees could be planted this year, as last year. Unlike last year, funding will not be given for EAB this year. Therefore, no surplus money will be available in this year's STC budget.

Commissioners discussed how the residents could effectively choose which tree they would want planted on their property. The Commission will put on their website a list of tree species that would be appropriate for the town. Mr. Chmura noted that the Arbor Day Foundation website would also be helpful to residents interested in planting new trees.

Shade Tree Banners

Mrs. Drew and the Commission discussed again the possibility of the Borough lending some of their tree banners to Manasquan NJ to display. Chrmn. Truppo noted that a shared service agreement, involving a substantial legal fee, would have to be drawn up by the Borough Attorney between the two towns. Mrs. Drew stated that she would then buy the banners herself for Manasquan.

New Business

Mr. Fekete expressed concern about a volunteer application submitted by a resident a month ago, seeking to join the Shade Tree Commission. No response has been given by the Mayor. Chrmn. Truppo and Mrs. Drew stated that they will look into this situation.

Chrmn. Truppo reported that a new form will be made available on the Borough website for residents – the Tree Service Request Form.

Commissioners discussed the NJ Shade Tree Federation Annual Conference which will be held on October 19th and 20th at the Crown Plaza in Cherry Hill, NJ.

At 8:37 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2017, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary