

## CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

7:30 p.m.

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

Name	Present	Absent
Colleen Truppo, Chrmn.	X	
Christopher Jadro		X
Fran Drew		X
Ken Fekete	X	
Dean Wilson	X	
Kristy Chmura	X	
Ken Chmura	X	
Council Member James Collander		X
Tony Torello	X	
Liz Holler, Minutes Secretary	X	

Also present:

Carol Nauta, Borough Recreation Coordinator

Robert Scherer, a builder with Custom Homes

### Public Comment

Robert Scherer stated that his company, Custom Homes, is constructing a home at 74 Fairview Avenue. An existing tree sits in the middle of what will be the proposed driveway, which is located in the Borough right-of-way. The Shade Tree Commission has denied Custom Homes' request to remove this tree. Mr. Scherer is submitting an appeal for this tree removal tonight to the Commission. To make up for the loss of this tree, Mr. Scherer offered to donate to the Shade Tree replenishment fund.

Chrmn. Truppo thanked Mr. Scherer for all the information on this matter. His appeal is listed on tonight's agenda for discussion later in the evening.

Mr. Scherer noted that a proposed landscaping plan for the property has been submitted, which he felt would be very attractive. He briefly described this plan to the Commissioners.

Chrmn. Truppo thanked Mr. Scherer for including the proposed trees which will be planted.

Mr. Scherer thanked the Commissioners for their time and departed.

Carol Nauta asked if communications could be better between the Shade Tree Commission and the Board of Recreation. The Board of Recreation had looked into installing privacy screening around the municipal park pool recently. Instead, new trees were planted in the playground area, close to the pool.

Mrs. Nauta pointed out that the playground area is on the small area. Perhaps some sections, like close to the playground equipment could have some trees planted to provide shade for the children. Any trees planted close to the swimming pool deposits debris into the pool and clogs its filters.

Regarding the trees planted close to the playground equipment, Mrs. Nauta pointed out, if one of the pieces of playground equipment is removed in the future, the Board of Recreation must follow the guidelines of the Consumer Products Safety Commission which may have requirements regarding play equipment and trees.

Mrs. Nauta noted that she had met Chrmn. Truppo and Mr. Torello at Memorial Park to discuss this matter. However, moving forward, she asked that better communications be maintained between the Shade Tree Commission and the Board of Recreation. She was not opposed to the planting of trees in the Borough parks, however the location of the trees effect the sports activities on the fields. One area on the playground where trees should not be planted is close to the swing-set.

Mr. Fekete asked if the trees planted in Memorial Park were a Shade Tree Commission endeavor.

Chrmn. Truppo answered that these trees were included in the Commission's fall planting program. Homeowners have limited planting space for shade trees. To maintain an adequate canopy, larger trees have to be planted somewhere in the Borough.

The Commission and Mrs. Nauta will have to work together on this playground/tree situation together.

Regarding Memorial Park pool, Mr. Torello felt on a personal level, he would not want a tree near a swimming pool. Mrs. Nauta added that undesirable activities take place on the playground at night which result in broken tree branches, people climbing over the fences, etc.

Summing up, Mrs. Nauta asked the Commission to keep her in the loop of any proposals they may have for the Borough parks.

Mrs. Nauta thanked the Commission for their time and left.

#### Motion to Adopt the Meeting Minutes

Mr. Chmura made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended, of the January 16, 2018 Shade Tree Commission meeting. Mr. Fekete seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### Election of Officers for the Year 2018

Chrmn. Truppo reported that Mr. Jadro will be unable to serve as Vice Chairman of the Commission.

Chrmn. Truppo made a motion to nominate Kristy Chmura as Vice Chairman of the Shade Tree Commission for the year 2018. Mr. Chmura seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Mr. Fekete made a motion to nominate Colleen Truppo as Chairman of the Shade Tree Commission for the year 2018. Ms. Chmura seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

#### Arbor Day Planning

Chrmn. Truppo noted that every year the Mayor does a proclamation for Arbor Day in Chatham. This proclamation is needed for the Borough's Tree City certification every year. Borough Clerk Robin Kline has confirmed with Chrmn. Truppo that this proclamation will be issued in April. Also, Janice Piccolo has given the okay to have the Commission's tree banners put up in April.

#### Arbor Day Concert

Ms. Chmura announced that she will hold an Arbor Day Concert on Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2 – 3 p.m. at St. Patrick Church. Like last year, the church requested that the Shade Tree Commission accept no donations at this concert. Help will be needed to distribute flyers announcing the concert. A press release and a Chatham Patch article should be done.

On other events, Chrmn. Truppo noted that last summer the Commission helped the St. Paul's Vacation Church School with a field trip and crafts project about local trees. Chrmn. Truppo has since reached out to the Chatham Library to see if they were interested in another tree program for the young people. The Library was definitely interested and designated April 25<sup>th</sup> from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for this event. A rain date will also be designated.

Chrmn. Truppo suggested that some of the money the STC recently received from the Jaycees could be used for Arbor Day events. Maybe an essay contest could be held, asking young people to write about their favorite tree in town. A cash prize can be given out. Ms. Chmura offered to help read and judge these tree essays.

Commissioners discussed what the STC will do for the Fishawack Festival. Perhaps the Shade Tree Commission can ask the Environmental Commission if they can be included at the EC table. This matter will be re-visited at a future meeting. In the meantime, Chrmn. Truppo will reach out to Chrmn. Murphy about a possible collaboration of the two commissions on Fishawack Day.

#### Tree Removal Request – 174 Weston Avenue

Chrmn. Truppo reported that a Tree Service Request Form has been sent to the Commission from the resident at 174 Weston Avenue. The resident, Mr. Srikanth, is asking that a tree in front of their home be taken down. Chrmn. Truppo read aloud the letter that Mr. Srikanth had attached to his Tree Request Form. Mr. Torello informed the Commissioners that this letter was written after the Borough had denied the homeowner's request to remove the tree. In his letter, Mr. Srikanth voiced health concerns this tree may be giving his family.

Mr. Chmura made a motion that the Shade Tree Commission ask the Borough Arborist, John Linson, take a look at this tree at 174 Weston Avenue and submit his evaluation to the Commission. Ms. Chmura seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

#### Tree Removal Request – 74 Fairview Avenue

Chrmn. Truppo read aloud a letter from Robert Scherer of Gialluisi Homes on behalf of the homeowner, Timothy Alden at 74 Fairview Avenue. In his letter, Mr. Scherer explained that the tree in the path of the driveway is a hardship to the homeowner. The Commission had denied the tree removal request because they felt it was a healthy tree.

Chrmn. Truppo showed the Commission the PDF version of the proposed landscape plan for the property. Mr. Scherer's letter described the landscaping plans for the property. Mr. Torello commented that the existing driveway is very narrow. Mr. Chmura gave his observations from a recent visit he made to the property. Commissioners discussed what recommendations they should make on the tree situation on this property, and if substitute trees should be suggested. They carefully reviewed the plans submitted by Mr. Scherer.

After further discussion, Mr. Chmura made a motion that the previous decision the Shade Tree Commission had made about the tree in the path of the driveway still stands. Mr. Fekete seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted aye.

#### Open positions on the Board

Chrmn. Truppo recalled at last month's meeting, the Commission had voted to contact an interested resident and invite him to attend a Commission meeting. Chrmn. Truppo had approached Robin Kline, the Borough Clerk, and asked if this gentleman's application could be given to provide his phone number. Ms. Kline informed her that the Commission could not have a prospective Commissioner's information. Ms. Kline reminded Chrmn. Truppo that the Mayor makes the appointments for Board members and Commissioners. The Commission doesn't participate in this process.

Chrmn. Truppo noted that an announcement was made on the Borough website asking for volunteers for Boards and Commissions.

Ms. Chmura suggested that the Commission should follow the current process for prospective members.

After further discussion, Chrmn. Truppo agreed to email Mayor Harris and Council Member Collander to remind them that there are still two vacancies on the Shade Tree Commission that need filling.

#### Shade Tree Trust

Chrmn. Truppo reported that the Commission has heard back from the State informing Commissioners that they are allowed to create a special trust account budget rider to accept donations. Chrmn. Truppo also noted that she had consulted with Mr. Day, the Borough CFO, and he has given the green light for the Commission to accept donations.

Mr. Fekete suggested an announcement be put on the Borough website stating that the Shade Tree Commission is now accepting donations to a fund to further the goals to improve the tree canopy in the Borough. Ms. Chmura suggested an online donation form be put on the web site for donations during Arbor Day week. Chrmn. Truppo noted that she will be putting information about the Arbor Day activities on the Borough website, perhaps information could be given for people interested in donating to the fund.

Ms. Chmura suggested the Commission ask Robin Kline, the Borough Clerk, the correct way for these donations to be made to the Commission.

#### Tree ordinance update

Chrmn. Truppo reported that Council Member Collander recently gave a presentation to the Borough Council, on an informational level, on the revising the ordinance on public trees. The Council Members asked good questions on this discussion. She noted that a decision has to be made of when a hazard tree be taken down, how should a replacement be done to maintain the town's tree canopy. A procedure should be in place when a hazardous tree is removed and a new one is planted.

#### STC Quarterly Activities

Chrmn. Truppo will email a sign-up chart to Commissioners for volunteering their time for future STC activities. She reminded Commissioners that certain activities need to be undertaken to earn the Tree City Status for Chatham Borough.

On other matters, Mr. Chmura reported on a joint meeting held in February between Madison and Chatham. From that meeting, Mr. Chmura distributed an informative document: "Best Practices" for Commissioners and Board members to follow. At this meeting, a suggestion had been made that representatives from other Boards and Commissions attend Borough meetings to stay informed of current activities and issues.

Related to Mr. Chmura's report, Chrmn. Truppo brought up the Riverside Trail Advisory Committee which is working on a trail at Shepard Kollock Park. Council Member Resto has extended an invitation to any interested Shade Tree Commissioners. Chrmn. Truppo will be attending.

Chrmn. Truppo reported that Janice Piccolo, the Borough's Community Services Director, has sent her information on a Roots for River Reforestation grant. The deadline for this grant is this month; however, Chrmn. Truppo will still look into it.

At 9:05 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Borough Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, upper level, Chatham Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler  
Recording Secretary