

Borough of Metuchen
Shade Tree Commission
Annual Report to the Mayor and Borough Council
2008

George Fromm – Commission Chair
December 8, 2008

Mission

The Shade Tree Commission is charged with “the regulation, planting, care and control of shade and ornamental trees along Borough streets, and in public places and parks.”

Our mission is to protect the asset our shade trees represent, enhance the quality of life for Borough residents, and foster a better environment by planting and maintaining sustainable, healthy, and safe shade trees, preserving species diversity, and promoting proper tree care and stewardship in the Community.

Members

Since the appointment of our newest member, Dorothy Rasmussen, in May 2008, the Commission is finally operating with its full complement of five members. The 2008 Commission Chair is George Fromm, Laurie Hart is Secretary, and the other members are Coleen Hines and Kathy Dopart.

Tree Planting

In 2008 the Commission expanded the list of contractors receiving requests for quotes, and returned to the 2” to 2 ½” caliper specification for plantings. Pre-purchase approval of nursery stock and on-site inspection of planting practices are now required in our planting contracts to help ensure survival of newly planted trees.

Thanks to these actions and our increased budget allocation, we have been able to plant more than 85 trees this year. Twenty-five trees were planted in the Spring, and more than sixty in the Fall. This year’s Fall planting was delayed for several reasons, but it should be completed the week of December 15th. Occasionally homeowners will object at the last minute to having a tree planted adjacent to their property, in which case we will plant in alternate locations. An updated list will be made available when planting has been completed.

A list of the Spring 2008 planting locations, and the proposed Fall 2008 locations, is appended to this document.

Community Activities

Arbor Day

Arbor Day 2008 was observed on Friday, April 25th, by planting eight maple trees around the Edgar School playing field. Edgar School Principal, Kathy Glutz, Nancy Goldberg of the Recreation Commission, and the Department of Public Works worked with us to select the planting sites, determine sprinkler locations, and plan a successful project. The Metuchen-Edison YMCA once again generously contributed the trees for the Borough’s Arbor Day planting.

Mayor Vahalla, Environmental Clubs from Edgar School and Metuchen High School, children from the YMCA's programs, many scouts, and members of the public participated in the event. Metuchen's Environmental Commission also participated and planted several ornamental trees near the Edgar School parking lot,

The Commission gratefully acknowledges these contributions and appreciates the interest expressed by all the Arbor Day participants.

October Country Fair

For the third year, the Commission participated in the Metuchen Country Fair on October 4th. Two Pin Oaks donated by the Presbyterian Church were used at the booth in a display of good and bad mulching methods. Information on tree care and maintenance, correct planting techniques and proper mulching methods was distributed. A colorful banner created by children from the YMCA adorned the booth.

Library Bulletin Boards

We continue to mount displays on the Metuchen Public Library's bulletin board in April and September.

Miscellaneous

The Commission put together a package of current information for the Planning and Zoning Boards and the Technical Review Committee regarding approved street tree species, the replacement formula when a tree is removed, and other street tree-related considerations for zoning variance applications.

Community Forestry

Community Forestry Management Plan

The Shade Tree Commission submitted its first Community Forestry Management Plan in 2008.

The Green Communities Challenge Grant awarded by the New Jersey DEP Division of Parks and Forestry made it possible for us to engage ForesTree Consultants to advise us on the CFM Plan. From April through September, Commission members worked with ForesTree to determine our goals and strategies and draft the five-year plan. We presented the Plan to the Mayor and Council on October 6th, and after approval by the Council, the Plan was submitted to the State on October 9th. Our Plan was approved at the Forestry Council meeting on December 11th.

This plan focuses on the basic elements of inventory and assessment, tree maintenance, tree planting, and the safety of the community forest. It outlines implementation goals and objectives for five years, giving us a framework for pro-active management of the Borough's tree resource. An approved plan provides additional liability protection to the Borough under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Act (P.L.1996, Chapter 135) and will make the Borough eligible to apply for grant funds from the New Jersey Forest Service to assist in the implementation of the plan.

CSIP Grants

Upon approval of the Community Forestry Management Plan and completion of the CORE training requirements, the Borough of Metuchen is qualified to apply for Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) grants to help offset the cost of implementing this plan.

The Commission has filed an application for a 2009 CSIP grant to perform a street tree inventory and condition assessment. The maximum possible award is \$25,000, and the Borough must match with \$8,330 (25% of the total project amount). The match can be made in “in-kind” contributions, however, and that is how we have structured our proposal. CSIP Grants are awarded in January.

Tree City USA

Metuchen’s Tree City USA status was renewed for 2008. Conferred by the National Arbor Foundation, the Tree City USA program affirms our community’s commitment to the environment, our quality of life, and our trees.

New Jersey Shade Tree Federation

The Commission continues membership in the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation. George Fromm, Laurie Hart, and Dorothy Rasmussen attended the Federation’s Annual Meeting in Cherry Hill October 24 and 25. Dorothy, along with Brian Lewis and Jim Horvath from Public Works, completed the one-day CORE training on Friday. The educational presentations included sessions on Keeping Trees Alive in a Changing Environment; Tree Diseases and Insect Outlook; The Landscape Below Ground; and New York City’s Tree Planting and Sustainability Initiatives. The CORE training is required in order for our Community Forestry Management Plan to be approved under the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act; the other sessions qualify for CE credits required under the Act. Metuchen has now met - and surpassed - the State’s minimum CORE training requirements.

The Commission’s volunteer members dedicate a great deal of time and effort toward preserving the shade tree resource that helps make Metuchen a beautiful and livable community. We are grateful for the support Mayor Thomas Vahalla and the Borough Council have given our efforts; and we especially appreciate the assistance and guidance provided throughout the year by our Council Liaison Richard Dyas, Borough Administrator William Boerth, Borough Clerk Bozena Lacina, and Financial Officer Rebecca Cuthbert.

2008 Tree Plantings

Spring

49	Lake	Elm
59	Elm	Elm
59	Elm	Elm
0	Ely Court	Elm
35	Sheridan	Elm
75	Robins Pl	Ginkgo
108	Maple	Ginkgo
74	Robins Pl	Ginkgo
75	Robins Pl	Ginkgo
311	Woodbridge Ave	Ginkgo
64	Eggert	Locust
303	Amboy Ave	Locust
75	Carson Ave	Locust
33	Stirling	Locust
4	Wildwood Terr	Locust
31	Peltier	Pin Oak
110	Columbia Ave	Pin Oak
11	Pleasant Pl	Pin Oak
17	Denise Ct.	Pin Oak
0	Ely Court	Pin Oak
9	Connor	Scarlet Oak
9	Connor	Scarlet Oak
43	Rector	Scarlet Oak
138	Christol	Scarlet Oak
215	Woodbridge Ave	Scarlet Oak

Fall (Proposed)

287	Durham Ave	Ash
305	Durham Ave	Ash
305	Durham Ave	Ash
311	Durham Ave	Ash
311	Durham Ave	Ash
49	Lake	Ginkgo
417	Wakefield Dr	Ginkgo
45	Essex Ave	Ginkgo
49	Lake	Ginkgo
417	Wakefield Dr	Ginkgo
197	Durham Ave	Linden
197	Durham Ave	Linden
349	Durham Ave	Linden
355	Durham Ave	Linden
359	Durham Ave	Linden
22	E. Walnut	Locust

26	E. Walnut	Locust
180	Center St	Locust
18	Lindsley Pl	Locust
62	Brunswick	Locust
180	Center St	Locust
300	Durham Ave	Locust
301	Durham Ave	Locust
301	Durham Ave	Locust
7	New St	Locust
67	Norris	Pin Oak
68	Eggert	Pin Oak
61	Spring St. (in lawn)	Pin Oak
3	Ely Court	Pin Oak
	Rector	Pin Oak
271	Durham Ave	Pin Oak
283	Durham Ave	Pin Oak
283	Durham Ave	Pin Oak
68	Eggert	Pin Oak
	Rector	Pin Oak
227	Durham Ave	Plane
284	Durham Ave	Plane
288	Durham Ave	Plane
290	Durham Ave	Plane
312	Durham Ave	Plane
312	Durham Ave	Plane
318	Durham Ave	Plane
318	Durham Ave	Plane
328	Durham Ave	Plane
330	Durham Ave	Plane
332	Durham Ave	Plane
334	Durham Ave	Plane
346	Durham Ave	Plane
352	Durham Ave	Plane
358	Durham Ave	Plane
364	Durham Ave	Plane
370	Durham Ave	Plane
384	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane
	Durham Ave	Plane