METUCHEN SHADE TREE COMMISSION

BOROUGH HALL • 500 MAIN STREET • METUCHEN, NJ 08840

Minutes: March 12, 2012

Present: George Fromm, Tracey Gelber, Cher Krumins-Beens, Linnae Bulun, Frank Ferrera, Maggie Manza, Ushentha Govender, and Dorothy Rasmussen

Meeting Called to Order: 7:05PM by Tracey Gelber, seconded by Ushentha Govender

- **99 Orchard replanting request** – Resident came into visit to get update on what is happening on future planting. Also commented that there is more continued cutting and as weather warms up there is more activity. Frank informed that the water company is not giving an answer to what is the plan for the site. Tracey is going to follow-up on feasibility of having 2nd party to plan area as charity. Dorothy gave status that the city is working with Middlesex Water to determine what the Metuchen property is and where city can plant tress to address resident issues. Next step – Tracey meeting with Bill Thursday 3/15 and will add to her agenda for that day.

- **Communications** – Tracey is requesting a Shade Tree email be created for our use. The email address requested by STC is stc@metuchen.com. Frank would be willing to man the email box. George was interested in also asking for a phone number be assigned. Dorothy reported that Borough Hall has Wi-Fi available.

- **Arbor day (4/27/12)** - Frank spoke with Mrs. Carter and she will be involved again this year. Maggie is going to finalize the donation with Home Depot and need to finalize type of tree to determine location of tree. Frank to send email prior to see if people can attend.

- **STC Flyer program-** Dorothy got approval to put flyers on website. Cher and George to continue working on finalizing Flyers to pass along to Borough for site load.

- **Boro Hall Tree Plaque program** – Got our first donation Kimberly Ledew . It was determined the price point should be at $275. George presented plaque. He developed a letter to start off program. George has begun advertising for the program with funeral homes, senior center and developed a rough draft letter.
    - Donation checks need to get to Becky Cuthbert, CFO. George will drop off the first check to her this week.
    - Partial donations can be given to STC but not be given a plaque placement. Maybe just a call out on our website.
    - Tracey will work on placement of the Plaque. George would like it to be by the zoning office.

- **Spring Planting** Being held up for budget. They have only$ 6k dedicated but need $8k to proceed with the planned 42 trees. There are two account s that we could look to fill-in the gap. One, the Reserve for Planting Tree account (Donations etc.) 2nd account Dedication by Ryder (replacement $$ from contractors etc.) that has roughly $4k in the account. Purchase Order needs to be ready ASAP. George concerned if wait for town approval will miss cut-off for spring planting. Dorothy advises that Town budget was going to be very tight so

this also a reason to use the Ryder account. Tracey concerned that taking only the $6k and not pushing for the $8k will jeopardize the funding for the future. Tracey requested an extension until her meeting on Thursday to decide our next step. Proposed budget does not show a cut but not to be finalized until May.

- Mayor against resident planting due to liability - STC reviewing possibility of having homeowners be involved in planting of trees they request and paid for by STC. Program is now tabled. We will work on giving donation trees to homeowner requests.

- **Tree Inventory** –STC members agreed to "walk around" day to be scheduled in the Spring. Ushentha developing a plan on timing, dates, information needs for "walk around". Consider creation of a Walk around sheet.
    - **Davey Tree** – called regarding renewal of access fee. Tracey to follow-up on needs to get this done.

- **Metuchen Messenger Articles** (4x per year) – Linnae researching articles and topics for write-ups. Linnae finalized this past month. And will follow-up in the fall

- **Metuchen Friends of the Library –** Tracey gave Sandra F. president of the Friends of the Library a contact Dorothy Obropta from Garden Club. Girl Scout is also going to get involved with tree replacement and George will give tree recommendations.

- **Mayor Report** – Dorothy reported Mayor stated is not concerned if lose Tree City USA status based on budget cut. Mayor is no longer looking to develop system and wants all issues to be addressed directly with Fred Hall via public works.

- **Metuchen High School Cultural Club** – George is now working with school to determine best place to plant. Frank continues to work with school on project.

- **Bulletin Board Metuchen Library** – Cher will work on April Board and will look to include the Plaque program.

- **Government Updates** - Tracey to call Railroads and Middlesex Company to find point of contact.

- **Misc. Concerns:**
    - 59 Upland – will give permission to cut down tree destroying house foundation but will be homeowner responsibility to replace value of trees to town. STC will request that Mayor and Fred Hall sign letter. George to write –up for their review. Tracey to sign.
    - Ethel Place – Oil tank leak fix will jeopardize large tree on property. STC will give contractor permission to remove tree but will need two new trees to the town as replacement value. Again letter to resident/contractor to have 3 signatures (STC, Mayor & Fred Hall). – Letter went out but no follow-up has been received.
    - How do we get a law into the book regarding development projects that are jeopardizing a tree's future but not immediately? Maggie to see how other towns are addressing this issue to consider possible next steps and report back at next meeting.

Next Meeting: April 14th @ 7PM

Meeting Adjourned: 8:32 by Maggie Manza and seconded by Linnae Bulun