

Metuchen Shade Tree Commission Minutes, 5/2/23

Attending: Dorothy Rasmussen, Bettina Caluori, Ken Sammond, Rebecca Sabreen, Kunhan Lee

Bettina calls the meeting to order at 7:40 pm, no members of the public are present

Approval of Minutes from 4/4/23

Rebecca moved to accept minutes, Ken Seconded. Minutes were accepted unanimously.

Review of invoice of spring planting

Dorothy presents the invoice for the spring planting for 33 trees, this invoice was reviewed by all members, Ken motions to approve the invoice, Kunhan seconds, motion is approved.

Review of Arbor Day planting 4/28

Dorothy reviewed proclamation read on Arbor Day for the tree planting at St. Luke's. Boy scouts and the shade tree commission were there along with Brian Lewis to plant a zelkova tree. Video and pictures requested of the planting to upload to the shade tree committee website. Dorothy states Brian Lewis will be present at the 6/6 meeting to answer questions from the commission. Kunhan asks about the source of the tree and whether planting younger trees would allow more trees to be planted. Dorothy states more mature trees are more resilient.

Farmers Market Planning

Mentioned the need to communicate with Nelson Liu for a date for the Shade Tree committee to set up a tent at the farmer's market to distribute literature and answer questions to the public. Shade tree committee banner needs to be found or a request inputted for a new one to be made. Emailed Jeremy to request a date with the farmer's market for dates.

New Business

Dorothy has new business. She met with Borough Administrator Melissa Perilstein regarding the purvey of the Shade Tree Commission. Tree types, plans for planning board to review trees, quantities and types along with statutory codes were discussed, Melissa seemed amenable to those suggestions. Dorothy also reminded her regarding the importance of reinstating the tree inventory in order to track overall tree census and for future planning. Bettina asks regarding DPW use of the prior Davey Tree inventory, to which Dorothy responded that the DPW used their own internal system to track trees when the previous tree inventory was live.

Ken mentions the iTree program that was discussed at the last commission meeting. Bettina mentions that this would be a good item to discuss with the public at the Farmer's market.

Dorothy states the importance of resurrecting prior commission activities that were suspended due to Covid including walkabouts and cleaning. A date is set for the shade tree commission to do a walkabout around Central Ave and main street on 5/13 at 9am at the plaza. Ken mentions that DPW has cut down dead trees on center street.

Dorothy states the importance of picking proper trees and having them vetted by the commission. An example she brings up are the honey locust trees planted on Main Street by Middlesex Water Company due to the pods that are dropped and the nuisance they create.

Bettina mentions the need to talk to Brian Lewis at the next meeting about trees to plant. Rebecca asks if the commission should have questions prepared for.

Dorothy states she will review the code book regarding the Shade Tree Commission mission, tree standards and responsibilities.

Bettina mentions the NJ Department of environmental protection has released a model tree ordinance with a requirement to replace trees that are cut down which will help towns including Metuchen to update their ordinances. Ken adds that care for trees should include care for the environment and states he would like to see the environmental commission support the banning of gas leaf blowers.

Dorothy follows up with the name of the Davey Tree inventory system is called Treekeeper. Ken shows us the Princeton Tree keeper site that includes the types of trees, the age of trees, the impact of said trees on temperature, co2, and water management. Everyone is oohing and ahhing Princeton's immaculately inventoried trees.

Rebecca motions to adjourn, Ken Seconds.