

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SHADE TREE COMMISSION– TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN**

DECEMBER 5, 2013

OAKHURST, NEW JERSEY

The Regular Meeting was held in the Manager's Conference room, Town Hall, 399 Monmouth Road, Oakhurst, NJ 07755 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Von Gerichten
Member(s) Pogwist
Alternate Gordon
Associate Lutz

Absent: Member(s) Colten, Blejwas, Kliem
Associate(s) Rogoff, Gulick

Others: Amanda Norakus, Secretary
Mary Johnson, Resident
Diane Surmonte, Resident
Gillian Natanagara, Resident

Statement of Compliance with Open Public Meetings Law:

Laurel Von Gerichten announced that the notice requirements of the Open Public Meeting Law for this meeting have been satisfied; a copy of the Annual Notice was sent to the Asbury Park Press and The Coaster, posted in Town Hall and filed in the office of the Township Clerk on June 7, 2013.

A motion to adopt the November 7, 2013 minutes was made by Ray Pogwist and seconded by Laurel Von Gerichten.

In Favor: Pogwist, Von Gerichten
Opposed: None
Ineligible: Gordon, Lutz
Absent: Blejwas, Rogoff, Gulick, Colten, Kliem

REVIEW:

1. Agenda
2. Budget – No Updates
3. Correspondence – None

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Status of paper “Maintaining and Growing the Urban Forest in Ocean Township”

Members shared their comments. The City of Bowie, Maryland, report on invasives removal cited in the paper had much material to contribute to a program in Ocean Township. The commission asked about long-term effects of invasive removal programs, but the report was too new to include such data.

The members discussed the need for DPW to control the program. Ideally, DPW would have designated employees to coordinate, train, delegate, and complete the necessary tasks.

“Old Oak Park”

Commissioners Hank Kliem and Laurel Von Gerichten, along with residents Mary Johnson and Maggie Boyce, conducted a site visit to determine an action plan. Their recommendations include removing two oaks which have lost their crown, trees, grinding the stumps plus another stump, using the Shade Tree Fund for the purchase of additional trees, and seeking assistance from the DPW to supplement watering in the dry season (Maggie Boyce, resident, volunteered to water the trees).

Maggie Boyce shared with Laurel her wish to replace a tree at the local Intermediate school. Maggie will speak to the principal; it was decided to ask Mark Rogoff, Associate Commissioner, to speak with the Superintendent of Schools to see if he would be receptive to planting more shade trees on school properties. Previous communications with the school grounds administrator did not yield interest in this regard.

Hazard Tree Inventory

Laurel Von Gerichten stated she will be meeting with Township Manager Andrew Brannen, and Code Enforcement officer Tom Caruso on December 13, 2013, to further discuss the inventory. Laurel shared her discussions with Tom Caruso in regards to mailing out notifications to homeowners. As per code enforcement, letters cannot be mailed unless a violation has occurred or an eminent hazard is present. Therefore, trees marked as potentially hazardous could not be part of the mailing because there would not be follow up options.

The Shade Tree Fund has been approved for limited use in a residential street tree replanting program. Currently this fund can only be used to plant trees; however, if residents who must remove a tree because it is hazardous were to elect to replant a tree and applied under the residential street tree replanting program, it was suggested that the Shade Tree Fund could partially cover the cost of removal of the hazardous tree. The rationale is that a new tree cannot be planted unless the old one is taken away. Laurel will explore this idea with Andrew and Tom at the Dec. 13 meeting.

Accordingly, the code enforcement letters should not be sent out until this use of the Shade Tree Fund has been resolved.

ITEMS FOR UPDATES:

CFMP Recommendation

The recommendation was made by Council to hire William Brash to develop the Community Forestry Management Plan. Amanda will follow up on who will issue the contract.

Future Goals

The Commission discussed what might go into the next version of the CFMP.

- Maintain existing forestry
- Communication Plan to improve the timeliness of actions
- Assess effectiveness of initial tree hazard inventory
- Conduct a second quadrant of the hazard tree inventory
- Address concerns and issues of homeowners being responsible for trees in the ROW
- Discuss engaging Shade Tree Fund to be used for both planting and removal of trees
- Increase the tree canopy
- Explore grants of what is being offered to townships with damage

Comments:

Resident Diane Surmonte shared her comments and concerns regarding the loss of trees in her neighborhood. She expressed her hope for attention to the area in order for more trees to be replanted. She stated there is sufficient room within the ROW because no sidewalks are present to limit growth.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Norakus
Secretary