

**BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY**

**SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**August 27, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Borough of West Cape May Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Dave Hammond at 6:04 PM. This meeting is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-6 et seq., notice of which was sent to the Star and Wave and posted on the bulletin board in the foyer of Borough Hall, 732 Broadway, West Cape May, NJ.

**ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE**

Members present: Dave Hammond, Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman, Harry Schmidt and Parker Smith. Lisa Bernstein, Matt Notch, Bill Oetinger and Bill McCray were absent.

Others present: Peter Burke, Deputy Mayor

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

After a review of the minutes from the July 7, 2020 meeting, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Parker Smith and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The minutes were approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dave Hammond reported a balance of \$85, 579.42. Expenses included plantings and benches for Wilbraham Park and a tree planting at 398 Myrtle. It was noted that revenues will be down this year due to the impact of the pandemic on events and event attendance. A motion to accept the report was made by Harry Schmidt and seconded by Parker Smith. The report was approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- **408 Pacific Ave.**  
The homeowner requested the removal of a red maple. The borough arborist visited the property on July 28, 2020. He recommended that the determination for this tree be postponed until the Spring of 2021. The tree is showing signs of distress which could be due to the construction of the house at 410 Pacific. The tree has a low risk of failure and could recover. The request was tabled.
- **907 Farmdale**  
The property owner requested the removal of a mulberry tree. The borough arborist visited the property on July 16, 2020. He recommended that the tree not be removed. The tree has a defect in the trunk that causes a bent appearance. The defect is more cosmetic than structural. The probability of root or trunk failure is low. Dave Hammond made a motion that the removal be denied. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **137 Emerald**

The property owner requested the removal of a London plane tree due to a planned addition to the home. The London plane is a street tree and could interfere with the proposed driveway. The borough arborist visited the property on July 28, 2020. He recommended that the tree not be removed. The tree is significant and one of the larger trees in the borough. Its large canopy and root base create a significant aesthetic effect along the street. The overall risk rating of this tree is low. It is over 40 feet tall and less than 20 feet from the porch. The consequences of root failure could be significant. However, the potential for root failure is low and therefore the risk it presents is rated as low.

Property owner, Stephen McCoy testified that the tree is in the way of the proposed driveway. Its location impacts the line of sight, making it difficult to enter and exit the driveway.

Shade Tree Commission members explained that this is a significant borough tree and it should remain. In addition, its removal could set a dangerous precedent for others who would like to have off-street parking. This could endanger the borough's picturesque tree-lined streets.

After much discussion, Parker Smith made a motion to table the application and remand it back to zoning. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **17 E. Mechanic**

The property owner requested the removal of an oak tree. Several members of the Shade Tree Commission visited the property and recommended that tree be removed because it is in severe decline. Wayne Hoffman made a motion that the tree be removed and replaced with one large tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Susan Hoffman seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **436 Second (appeal)**

The property owner appealed the August 2019 denial to remove a honey locust tree. The borough arborist re-assessed the tree on July 16, 2020. He recommended again that the tree not be removed. The condition of the tree is good. It has an acceptable aesthetic quality and is not interfering with any other landscape. No branches larger than one inch are within four feet of the house or the neighboring home. Parker Smith made a motion to deny the appeal. Dave Hammond seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **322 Third**

This property is in the beginning stages of development. The zoning office asked the Shade Tree Commission to do a visual inspection of the lot. The borough arborist visited the property and wrote a preliminary tree preservation assessment. The details were shared with the developer who will work to incorporate the current trees into the final

property design. It is possible that the design of the garage and driveway could change based on the condition of the cherry trees found in the area. More will be known as the lot is cleared.

All the following properties sustained tree damage from the storm on August 4, 2020. Homeowners were required to submit a permit. The \$35 fee was waived, and no assessments were performed.

- **102 Second**  
A large sycamore tree came down. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace it with one small tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Dave Hammond seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **307 Broadway**  
One large sycamore tree and one medium tree of unknown variety came down. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace them with two medium or large trees. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **609 Sunset**  
One large tree of unknown variety came down. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace it with one large tree. Dave Hammond seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **122 Emerald**  
One large maple tree came down. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace it with one medium or large tree. Dave Hammond seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **303 Columbia**  
One large tree of unknown variety came down. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace it with one large tree. Parker Smith seconded, and the motion was approved.

#### **OPEN PUBLIC PORTION**

- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen McCoy were present to discuss their request to remove a tree at 137 Emerald.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Code Enforcement**  
The proposed tree ordinance was reviewed by the Shade Tree Commission at a special meeting on August 18, 2020. Wayne Hoffman reported that it has been delivered to the borough commissioners and legal counsel for review and input.
- **Wilbraham Park Benches**  
Peter Burke reported that the benches have been delivered to the borough. Public Works in putting them together.

- **Tree Inventory**

Susan Hoffman reported that the RFP is complete. It is posted on the West Cape May website and has been sent to several vendors who have expressed interest. The bids will be opened September 10, 2020.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Fall Tree Planting**

Susan Hoffman noted that an article about the fall tree planting appeared in The Star and Wave. It is also posted on the borough website. Currently, there are requests for eight trees.

- **Vine Clearing**

Wayne Hoffman asked for volunteers to remove vines from several large street trees in the borough. Dave Hammond and Harry Schmidt volunteered. A date will be selected.

- **WCM Website**

Susan Hoffman reported that the borough website has been updated. She revised the information about the Shade Tree Commission. It now includes more detailed information about the role of the commission, the tree removal process, and the requirement to use licensed tree service experts for tree removals.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business, Parker Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Harry Schmidt seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hoffman, Secretary