

BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

May 11, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Borough of West Cape May Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Wayne Hoffman 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: Lisa Bernstein, Dave Hammond, Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman, Matt Notch and Bill Oetinger. Bill McCray was excused. Peter Burke and Parker Smith were absent.

Others present: John Francis, West Cape May Commissioner and Barry Sullivan, resident and volunteer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the April 13, 2021 meeting, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Wayne Hoffman and seconded by Bill Oetinger. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Oetinger reported a balance of \$85,936.30. A motion to accept the report was made by Susan Hoffman and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The report was approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **43 7Third**
The property owners requested the removal of a crab apple tree. Several members of the Shade Tree Commission visited the property and recommended that the tree be removed and replaced with a medium or large size tree. Due to the presence of wetlands a black gum or similar tree was recommended. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to approve the recommendation. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved with Matt Notch abstaining.
- **109 Sixth**
The property owner requested the removal of a Norway maple tree. The borough arborist visited the property on April 28, 2021. He recommended that the tree not be removed. It is in good condition and has sufficient clearance from the house. Bill Oetinger made a motion to deny the removal. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **207 Stevens**

The property owner requested the removal of three Eastern hemlock trees. The borough arborist visited the property on April 28, 2021. He recommended that the trees be removed and replaced with three medium trees from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Bill Oetinger made a motion to approve the removals. Lisa Bernstein seconded, and the motion was approved with Matt Notch abstaining.

- **729 Broadway**

The property owner requested the removal of a locust tree. The borough arborist visited the property on April 28, 2021 and recommended that the tree be removed and replaced with large tree from the West Cape May List of Approved Trees. Dave Hammond made a motion to approve the removal and strongly recommend that the homeowners use a NJ licensed tree expert to do the removal due to the size of the tree and proximity to the neighboring house. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved.

OPEN PUBLIC PORTION

- Barry Sullivan discussed the benefits of developing a heritage tree program for the borough. Significant trees would be nominated for recognition. Small grants could be available to assist in the maintenance of such trees. Barry agreed to research the program and report at a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Code Enforcement**

A project at Second and Atlantic was discussed. Demolition on the lot occurred without tree protection. Zoning reported that there were no construction plans on record. According to the new ordinance, this is a violation and should result in a stop work order and be considered the first offense. Commissioners discussed how to be involved in the project sooner in the process.

A meeting with Norm Roach and the new code enforcement staff member will be arranged.

- **Tree Inventory**

The final report meeting is scheduled for May 21 from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Representatives from Cape May and Cape May Point will be invited.

- **Future Initiatives**

A meeting of the subcommittee consisting of Bill Oetinger, Joe Knoll, and Wayne Hoffman will be set up in the future.

- **Arbor Day/Sapling Giveaway**

We received 975 saplings. While the school program and public giveaways were well attended, we had too many trees. A better number for next year would be 500 to 600.

- **Spring Tree Planting**

Atlantic City Electric donated 15 flowering Okame cherry trees. They were planted in the 100 blocks of Second, Third and Fourth Avenues for impact. Other planting locations include WCM Elementary School, the Backyard Park and 818 Broadway. Publicity for the donation was suggested.

A spring planting will be held pending availability. This will cover those on the waiting list from the fall planting. We have requests for 12 trees.

- **Tree Replacement List**

Wayne Hoffman will work with Justin Vitola and the new zoning staff member.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Spotted Lantern Flies**

Bill Oetinger has still not heard from the vineyard to see what measures they might be pursuing. He will reach out again.

- **Tree behind WCM Elementary**

It was confirmed that the tree is on borough property. Matt Notch noted that the adjoining homeowner has asked him to prune it. Bill Oetinger suggested the commission remove the vines to preserve the tree.

- **158 Leaming**

The property owner requested assistance in removing vines on numerous trees on the property. Wayne Hoffman suggested the commission hold a monthly vine clearing session. The first Friday of each month at 9 am was selected. The team will meet at Borough Hall. The first session will take place on June 4.

- **Trees and Vines in Wetlands**

A property owner asked for direction on how to handle invasive vines and hazardous trees in wetlands. It was suggested legal counsel be contacted.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hoffman, Secretary