

BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

December 14, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Borough of West Cape May Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Dave Hammond at 6:36 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 lobby of Borough Hall, 732 Broadway, West Cape May, NJ.

ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE

Members present: Dave Hammond, Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman, Bill McCray, Bill Oetinger, Matt Notch, Harry Schmidt, and Barry Sullivan. Lisa Bernstein was absent.

Others present: Peter Burke, Deputy Mayor; Charles Bounds, Jeanette Cottone, John Cottone, and Joe Knoll, community members

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the November 9, 2021, meeting, a motion to accept the minutes with the correction of the spelling of Bill Oetinger's name was made by Wayne Hoffman and seconded by Dave Hammond. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Oetinger reported a balance of \$85,807.68. He stated that we are still awaiting reimbursement for the tree inventory grant and the allocation from the proceeds from the Farmer's Market. A motion to accept the report was made by Susan Hoffman and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The report was approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **120 Fifth Ave.**

Charles Bounds was in attendance to discuss the ordered removal of two catalpa trees in the borough-right-of-way on his property. Chair Wayne Hoffman updated the commission on the trees including:

- The trees being deemed hazardous by Davey Resource Group and Arbor Care Resources, the borough's arborist
- Mr. Bounds' attendance at a recent borough commissioners' meeting to request that the trees not be removed
- Arbor Care Resources subsequent re-assessment and remediation plan to save the trees

Mr. Bounds explained that the trees hold sentimental value as they were planted by his grandfather and have been on the property for many years. At his expense, he is willing to prune the trees based on the specifications outlined in Arbor Care Resources' remediation plan.

Following discussion, the following recommendation was made for the commissioners' consideration by Bill Oetinger and seconded by Dave Hammond.

The Shade Tree Commission recommends that the two catalpa trees located at 120 Fifth Ave. West Cape May be pruned to the standards outlined in the Arbor Care Resources Remediation Plan. The pruning will be done at the owner's expense. During the pruning if it is found that either of the trees is not a candidate for preservation it will be removed.

- **850 Broadway Unit #4**

The property owner was present to appeal the denial of the removal of three Japanese black pine trees. Initially, the borough arborist visited the property on November 4, 2021. He recommended that the pine tree closest to the neighbor's fence be removed and the remaining three pine trees not be removed. After re-consideration of the denial, the commission recommended that all four trees be removed because they are overgrown with vines and not native. The trees are to be replaced with two medium and two large trees from the WCM List of Approved Trees.

- **408 Fourth Ave.**

The property owner requested the removal of a black cherry tree and red cedar. The borough arborist visited the property on November 4, 2021. He recommended that both trees be removed. Bill Oetinger made a motion to remove both trees and replace them with two medium trees. Harry Schmidt seconded. The motion was approved with Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman and Matt Notch abstaining

- **523 Broadway**

The property owner requested the removal of an English holly tree. The borough arborist visited the property on November 23, 2021. He recommended that the tree be removed and replaced with a small or medium size tree. Barry Sullivan noted that the property owner planned to replace the tree with another holly. Since English holly is not on the approved list, the replacement should be an American holly. The arborist also observed that the large London plane on the property has an area of decay and should be evaluated. Wayne Hoffman will notify the homeowner. Barry Sullivan made a motion to approve the removal and Dave Hammond seconded. The motion was approved with Matt Notch abstaining.

- **268 Sixth Ave. Replacement**

The property owner removed a 47-inch red maple without a permit. The court fined the tree service operator and required the tree be replaced. Susan Hoffman made a motion

to replace the tree with two large trees from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Wayne Hoffman seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **500 State Street**

The property owner requested the emergency removal of a downed tree. Photos provided showed the tree was dead and resting on a fence. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to approve the removal and require no replacement due to lot coverage. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **619 Broadway Replacement**

The property owner removed a crabapple tree without a permit. The court fined the tree service operator and required the tree be replaced. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to replace the tree with one small tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **12 Willow Replacement**

The property owner removed a black cherry without a permit. The court fined the tree service operator and required the tree be replaced. Dave Hammond made a motion to replace the tree with one large tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved.

OPEN PUBLIC PORTION

- Charles Bounds was present to discuss tree removals at 120 Fifth Ave.
- Jeanette and John Cottone were present to discuss tree removals at 850 Broadway Unit #4.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Code Enforcement**

Wayne Hoffman reported that the sod around the newly planted trees on the corner of Broadway and Central had been cut after he requested the builder do so. He also noted the landscaping plans for recently built homes on Park, Morrison, 6th and 4th is ongoing.

Barry Sullivan suggested that permits be required for the removal of all trees in construction zones. This would allow for a more accurate count of trees removed and replacements required.

- **Emergency Tree Removal Amendment**

The commissioners approved the Emergency Tree Removal Amendment.

- **Removal of Dangerous Trees in Borough Right of Way**

Property owners of two other hazardous street trees have not responded or acted on the required removals.

- **Review of Landscaping Plans**

Ongoing.

- **Festival Follow Up**

The September festival will revert to the name Tomato Festival and will be held Saturday of Labor Day weekend. More marketing is required.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Eagle Scout Project/Friends of Wilbraham Park**

Barry Sullivan reported that an Eagle Scout would like to relandscape the former WWII memorial site in Wilbraham Park as his Eagle Scout project. In addition, Barry noted that he has contacted a WCM resident who is a master garden about assisting with the seasonal plantings in the park.

He also suggested that we consider expanding the role of The Friends of Wilbraham Park. The group could be structured as a 501-C-3 and be beneficial in fund raising, seasonal decorating, social media (facebook) and other volunteer activities. A local attorney has agreed to draft the organizational papers pro bono and Barry will work on the by-laws. The commission thanked him for his efforts and encouraged him to move forward on all fronts.

- **2022 Meeting Dates**

The 2022 meeting dates were reviewed. All meetings will occur on the second Tuesday of the month at 6 PM except for the February meeting which will occur on the first Tuesday of the month and be held in the small caucus room.

- **Electrical Outlets for Wilbraham Park**

Wayne Hoffman noted that additional outlets are needed in Wilbraham Park to accommodate holiday lighting. He will seek bids.

- **Other**

Bill Oetinger inquired about the unpaid permit fee for 417 Broadway. Susan Hoffman noted that it has been paid. In addition, he asked who was keeping track on the “strikes” against tree service operators. Wayne Hoffman reported that both the Shade Tree Commission and the zoning office were keeping track.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Hoffman, Secretary