

BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

August 9, 2022

West Cape May Borough Hall

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Borough of West Cape May Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Wayne Hoffman at 6:00 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, Matt Notch, Bill Oetinger, Harry Schmidt, and Barry Sullivan.

Others present: Peter Burke, Deputy Mayor, Judy Smith (408 Third Ave.), Carol Irwin (201 Atlantic Ave.), Linda Barr (322 Fourth Ave.) and Paige Cunningham (136 Third Ave.)

Wayne Hoffman led those present in the salute to the flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the meeting minutes from July 12, 2022, a motion to accept the minutes was made by Dave Hammond and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Oetinger reported a balance of \$90,528. There were not unexpected or significant expenditures or income for the month. Susan Hoffman made a motion to approve the report and Harry Schmidt seconded. The report was approved by unanimous vote.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **335 Fifth Ave.**
This request was tabled at the July meeting due to a missing tree service operator license number. The license number has been added to the permit. The property owner requested the removal of five trees. The borough arborist visited the property on July 6, 2022 and recommended that all the trees be removed and for each tree removed a large tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees be planted. It was noted that the property might not be able to accommodate the planting of five trees. The property owners will be made aware of the opportunity to donate to the tree bank. Susan Hoffman made a motion to approve the removals and the replacements. Harry Schmidt seconded. The motion was approved with Matt Notch abstaining.

- **440 Fourth Ave.**
 This request was tabled at the July meeting because the property owner stated he was going to take the tree down himself. A review of borough code found that a property owner can only take down a tree themselves if it is less than 6 inches in diameter. Therefore, a tree service operator was named on the permit. The property owner requested the removal of a sassafras tree. The tree is dead with the top half broken off. Barry Sullivan made a motion to approve the removal and the replacement of a large tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Susan Hoffman seconded. The motion was approved with Matt Notch abstaining.
- **117 Third Ave.**
 This request was tabled at the July meeting because the tree is a boundary tree and approval of the adjacent property owner is required. Brandan Crawford, the adjacent property owner at 119 Third Ave., sent an email giving his approval. The property owner requested the removal of an arborvitae. The borough arborist visited the property on July 6, 2022. He recommended that the tree be removed and replaced with one small or medium size tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Dave Hammond made a motion to approve the recommendation. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
- **925 Farmdale**
 This request was held over from the July meeting due to an incomplete assessment. Only one of the two Bradford pears was assessed. The property owner requested the removal of two Bradford Pear trees. The borough arborist visited the property on July 6, 2022, and on August 8, 2022. He recommended that both trees be removed and replaced with two large trees from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Susan Hoffman made a motion to approve the recommendation. Harry Schmidt seconded, and motion passed with Matt Notch abstaining.
- **8 Landis Ave.**
 The property owner requested the removal of a crab apple tree. The borough arborist visited the property on August 3, 2022. He recommended that the tree be removed and replaced with one large tree from the WCM List of Approved Trees. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to approve the recommendation and Dave Hammond seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- **Fourth Ave. Pumping Station**
 The Department of Public Works requested the removal of a dead willow tree at the pumping station on Fourth Ave. Wayne Hoffman visited the site and recommended that the tree be removed because it posed a hazard to the station. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to approve the removal and Harry Schmidt seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- **732 Broadway**
 Part of a large maple tree right at the entrance to Borough Hall come down. Shade tree commissioners and tree service operators assessed the tree. It was deemed it hazardous, and an

emergency removal was approved. Wayne Hoffman made a motion to approve the removal and to replace it with a tree the size of which will be determined later. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- **600 Park Blvd.**

Atlantic City Electric is replacing a pole at this address. The replacement will impact a large locust tree growing near the pole. The tree is currently growing into the wires and its roots will be cut when the new pole is installed. Therefore, Atlantic City Electric requests its removal. They will handle the removal and replace the tree. Barry Sullivan made a motion to approve the removal and require a replacement. The tree should be the same species as the others along the street and be planted in the same vicinity. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Oak Tree in Borough Hall Parking Lot**

Wayne Hoffman noted that an oak tree in the parking lot is in distress and should be removed. DPW will submit a permit soon.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Code Enforcement/Review of Landscaping Plans**

Bill Oetinger is drafting several new additions to the current ordinances.

Wayne Hoffman noted that he attended the Cape May Shade Tree Commission meeting on August 9, 2022. They will be forming a subcommittee to draft ordinances like the ones the WCM Shade Tree Commission use.

Code enforcement issued a second notice to two local builders concerning tree replacements at two newly constructed homes. They will be cited if they do not respond.

New owners at 820 Broadway will be cited for removing a tree without a permit. Thanks to a neighbor for noticing the activity and alerting the borough.

A group of neighbors helped clean up a tenant occupied property at 500 Fourth Ave. They removed vines from 18 trees, numerous beer cans from the fire pit and other debris from throughout the property.

- **2019/2020 Tree Replacements**

Susan Hoffman has begun the process of following up on tree replacements for trees removed by homeowners. She sent emails to all homeowners who received tree removal permits in 2019 and 2020. Homeowners were asked to send proof of the planting and send documentation. Code enforcement will be making the final inspections. 62 letters have been sent and 20 people have responded with details of their replanting.

- **Wilbraham Park/Centennial Celebration/Friends of Wilbraham Park**

Barry Sullivan presented the attached report.

- **Planning Board Projects**

Wayne Hoffman reviewed plans for a new subdivision at Atlantic and Sunset. He noted that there are five large street trees on the property that should not be impacted if the lots are developed in the future.

- **Commission Vacancy**

Glenda Unzelmann is being considered to fill vacant seat on the commission.

- **Swimming Pools**

Legal counsel confirmed that the Shade Tree Commission can review site plans for new pools and can make recommendations about the location of such pools to preserve the tree canopy.

- **Vine Removal**

Removals continue throughout the borough. This work is performed by STC members and other community volunteers.

- **Strawberry Festival**

The WCM Business Association recently expressed concern over the STC decision to review the impact of the 2023 Strawberry Festival on Wilbraham Park before granting permission to return to the park for 2024. They feel that they should automatically be able to hold the event in the park without a yearly review. It was explained that borough code states that the list of events scheduled for the park is approved on an annual basis by the borough commissioners. There is no such thing as automatic renewal. This process has been in place for many years.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Tree Canopy Evaluation Zoom Call Aug. 16 @ 11 AM**

Susan Hoffman reported that planitgeo is offering a free one-hour tree canopy consultation. During the consultation they will review our current tree canopy coverage and show how it has changed over time. She will send a link to the Zoom call to all commissioners.

- **Tree Work @ Pollinator Park**

Wayne Hoffman reported that the trees in Pollinator Park on Third Ave. need maintenance. DPW has expressed a concern about safety due to several large branches hanging from the trees. He is getting quotes to clean up the trees and will share them with the Environmental Commission.

- **Gator Bags**

To encourage homeowners to water their newly planted trees, Wayne Hoffman proposed that gator bags be loaned to them when a tree is planted on their property by the Shade Tree Commission. Barry Sullivan made a motion to approve \$1,000 to purchase the bags. Harry Schmidt seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

OPEN PUBLIC PORTION

Linda Barr of 322 Fourth Ave. spoke of her concern about the number of swimming pools being installed in the borough. She asked about the content of the letter the Shade Tree Commission recently sent to the borough on the topic. She also asked if there was a program in place to recognize significant trees on public or private property. Barry Sullivan explained the state's big tree program and how West Cape May has a program in place to support homeowners with the care of such designated trees. Lastly, she encouraged the commission to consider a way to address the presence of bamboo in the borough. It was suggested that the environmental commission might be the group to address the issue.

Carol Irwin of 201 Atlantic Ave. asked if you could designate a big tree on a neighboring property. Barry Sullivan explained that you could nominate such a tree, but the homeowner would have to agree to the nomination. She also noted that she has a swimming pool and made a conscious effort to surround the pool with greenery instead of just a fence as is required by code. She suggested that this could be a way for others to lessen the impact of pools on the environment.

Paige Cunningham of 136 Third Ave. asked if replacements were planned for two trees removed during the repaving project on Third Ave. She explained that they were large mature trees, and their removal has left a gap on the street. Susan Hoffman noted that there are none planned at this time. Ms. Cunningham noted that recently a Cape May homeowner submitted plans to install a swimming pool on a large side lot. The proposed location would require the removal of a very large and significant red cedar tree. The Cape May Shade Tree Commission asked Mickey Riffin to assess the plans. He suggested the pool be moved. The homeowner was encouraged to relocate the pool to save the tree. The request was refused. She asked if the West Cape May Shade Tree Commission had the authority to require the relocation of pools in similar situation. It was noted that the commission does not have that authority. We can only suggest. Lastly, she observed that during her regular walks through the borough there are many trees that need to be elevated. She encouraged the commission to undertake a maintenance plan to elevate the trees for clearance. It was noted that the maintenance of trees in the borough right of way is the responsibility of the adjoining homeowner. She also encouraged the commission to develop an informational brochure to educate the public about issues relating to trees such as their value and maintenance needs.

Judy Smith encouraged the Shade Tree Commission to use the borough newsletter which is mailed with the tax bills to educate residents about the importance of preserving our community's environment and other issues relating to trees.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hoffman, Secretary

Friends of Wilbraham Park (FWP)/Garden Committee:

1. The FWP have established a website: www.wilbrahampark.org and are working on a Facebook page
2. They have received several donations to help pay for the Rededication Ceremony, including a \$1000. Donation from Sturdy Savings Bank.
3. The plantings are going well, and the Garden Committee is working at the park every Friday, from 10am till noon, in addition to special planting days.
4. The Flying Fish Studio is making special 100 Anniversary commemorative T Shirts which will be sold at the Rededication Ceremony and in their store, proceeds to go to the FWP.
5. The FWP has received work T shirts and ball caps to identify volunteers.

Rededication Ceremony:

1. The Rededication Ceremony is scheduled for this Friday, June 18th. Raindate, June 19th.
2. The musical group The Honeyhawks will provide musical entertainment.
3. The USCG will play the National Anthem and present the Colors.
4. The Mayor will speak and read the Proclamation, Wilbraham Park Day.
5. Eagle Scout Luke Maxwell will be recognized.
6. WCM Elementary School Students will have their Park related work on display.
7. The Mayor and Borough Council will provide a ceremonial covering of the time capsule.
8. The monument base has been set. The monument will be displayed.
9. A ribbon cutting will officially reopen the park.

Needs:

1. Work day on Friday morning 6/17 9-11am to spruce up park. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
2. Pick up chairs and podium for the event.
3. Set up and take down help on 6/18, 9-11am. Chairs, Band, etc. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
4. Hand out programs and assist visitors with seating.
5. Reserve Parking spots (2) for Sturdy 100-year-old car, and Band, behind stage.