

BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Borough of West Cape May Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Dave Hammond at 6:00 PM in Borough Hall, 732 Broadway, West Cape May, NJ 08204. This meeting is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 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, Bill Oetinger and Harry Schmidt. Bill McCray and Parker Smith were excused.

Others present: Peter Burke, Deputy Mayor; Carol Sabo, Mayor and Hilary Pritchard, Chair, Environmental Commission

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the December 3, 2019 meeting, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Harry Schmidt and seconded by Bill Oetinger. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Oetinger reported a treasury balance of \$94,261.29. He presented a year-end treasury summary detailing deposits/credits and withdrawals/payments for all four of the Shade Tree accounts. The starting balance was \$93,305.96 with deposits/credits of \$29,745 and withdrawals/payments of \$28,878.09 resulting in a year-end balance of \$94,172.87. The net change was a positive \$866.91.

A motion to approve the treasurer's report and year-end summary with a note of sincere appreciation to Treasurer Bill Oetinger for his work was made by Harry Schmidt and seconded by Dave Hammond. The reports were approved.

REORGANIZATION

Proposed officers for 2020 include:

- Wayne Hoffman, Chair
- Dave Hammond, Vice Chair
- Bill Oetinger, Treasurer
- Susan Hoffman, Secretary

Harry Schmidt made a motion to approve the slate and Lisa Bernstein seconded. The slate was approved. Matt Notch noted that community member Ami Menz would be interested in joining the commission when a vacancy occurs.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **408 Fourth Ave.**

The homeowner requested the removal of a sassafras, ash and persimmon tree. The borough arborist visited the property on Nov. 15, 2019. He recommended that all three trees be removed. The sassafras is rotted at the bottom. The ash tree is leaning at more than a 20% angle and growing under a red cedar. The persimmon is growing too close to a holly. Dave Hammond and Bill Oetinger visited the site and agree with the removal of the first two trees but not the persimmon. Dave Hammond made a motion to approve the removal of the sassafras and ash and deny the removal of the persimmon. No replacement tree is required due to the more than 50% coverage on the property. Bill Oetinger seconded. The motion was approved with Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman and Matt Notch abstaining.

- **126-134 Third Ave.**

Wayne Hoffman reported that he spoke with Page Cunningham, one of the homeowners at this address. She and her husband would be unhappy to see the tree removed but understand that it could pose a risk. She noted that the sidewalk under the tree has heaved significantly and branches routinely fall from the tree onto their property. Discussion ensued about whose responsibility it is to pay for the removal if ordered. Past practice in the borough has been to have the homeowner pay. The cost of removing this tree could be significant. The item was tabled to seek legal advice on removal cost options.

- **Public Works Building**

It was confirmed that the three trees discussed at the December meeting are on borough property. They include a black cherry, sassafras and a hackberry. The borough arborist recommended that the black cherry and sassafras be removed because they both have a high probability of trunk failure. In addition, he felt the hackberry was also a candidate for removal unless the vines were carefully removed. Dave Hammond made a motion to approve the removal of the black cherry and sassafras. and deny the removal of the hackberry. Public works is to remove the vines on the tree and see if it will survive. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.

OPEN PUBLIC PORTION

- Mayor Carol Sabo and Hilary Pritchard, Chair of the Environmental Commission were present. Hilary Pritchard asked the commission to reconsider the installation of a hydration station in Wilbraham Park. Concerns raised by the Shade Tree Commission include sanitation and maintenance. Mayor Sabo stated that Public Works would be responsible for the station. She feels strongly that this would be positive addition to our community. The commission asked for information on costs and the experience of other

communities and sites where stations have been installed. The item will be discussed again at the March meeting.

Mayor Sabo asked the commission to think about planting locations for the Salem Oak sapling that the borough will soon receive. Sites suggested include the Backyard Park and West Cape May Elementary School.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Code Enforcement**

A sub-group consisting of Wayne Hoffman, Dave Hammond and Bill Oetinger will meet every Monday to work on the ordinance.

- **Wilbraham Park Benches**

Susan Hoffman reported it was suggested that the bench design and material be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Committee since the park lies within the historic district. Susan provided information to the committee including an overview explaining the need, product description and rationale for the choice of bench. The HPC meets on Feb. 13.

- **WCM List of Approved Trees**

Tabled

- **Tree Maintenance Contract**

Tabled

- **Tree Giveaway 2020**

Our request of 1,000 trees was approved by the Tree Recovery Program. They will be available for pick up on March 27, 2020 in Woodbine.

- **Educational Piece about Pesticides**

Tabled

NEW BUSINESS

- **NJ Dept. of Forestry Grant**

Susan Hoffman noted that we are awaiting contracting information from the state on the grant. She has talked with two prospective inventory vendors and will invite them to present at a future commission meeting.

- **Unlicensed Tree Service Vendors**

It was noted that two unlicensed vendors, The Tree Musketeers and Family Tree Service, were recently operating in the borough on private property. Both vendors were reported to the NJ Board of Tree Experts by Wayne Hoffman and cited by the borough.

- **Spring Planting**

Susan Hoffman noted that we are gathering sites for our spring planting. Please let her know of any interested community members.

- **Other**

Lisa Bernstein noted that there is a large magnolia tree on a construction site on Park Blvd. that is not being protected. Wayne Hoffman will talk with the builder.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hoffman, Secretary