

BOROUGH OF WEST CAPE MAY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2020

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: Dave Hammond (via phone), Susan Hoffman, Wayne Hoffman, Bill Oetinger, Harry Schmidt, and Parker Smith. Lisa Bernstein, Matt Notch and Bill McCray were absent.

Others present: Peter Burke, Deputy Mayor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the August 27, 2020 meeting, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Wayne Hoffman and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Oetinger reported little change since the last report. It was noted that preliminary results from the Tomato Festival show revenue could be equal to or exceed last year's results. A motion to accept the report was made by Parker Smith and seconded by Harry Schmidt. The report was approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **137 Emerald**

Wayne Hoffman reported that borough administration and legal counsel determined the decision on the removal of the large London plane tree at 137 Emerald should be handled by the Shade Tree Commission.

The situation was recapped. 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 owners, Stephen and Joyce McCoy were present and asked if the commission had seen their plans. Mr. Hoffman replied that they had been reviewed.

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.

Dave Hammond made a motion to deny the application. Susan Hoffman seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **206 Atlantic Ave.**

The property owner requested the removal of two black cherry trees. The borough arborist visited the property on August 24, 2020. He recommended that the 24-inch tree be removed, and the 18-inch tree remain. The larger tree is in severe decline and is not a candidate for preservation. The smaller tree is in minor to moderate decline, but the current vitality is fair. Susan Hoffman made a motion that the large tree be removed and be replaced with one tree described as large from the West Cape May List of Approved Tree. The removal of the small tree should be denied. Bill Oetinger seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **431 Third Ave.**

The property owner requested the removal of a red maple tree. The borough arborist visited the property on August 24, 2020. He recommended that the tree be removed. A large portion of one of the trunks broke off in the storm. Approximately, 50% of the canopy was lost. Bill Oetinger made a motion to approve the removal and replace it with one medium tree from the West Cape May List of Approved Trees. Harry Schmidt seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **407 Third Ave.**

The property owner requested the removal of two poplar trees. The borough arborist visited the property on August 24, 2020. He recommended that both trees be removed. They are in decline and the vitality of both is poor. Susan Hoffman made a motion that the trees be removed, and replacement be limited to one small or medium size tree due to the extent of the tree canopy on the property. Parker Smith seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **302 Broadway**

The property owner requested the removal of a horse chestnut tree. The borough arborist visited the property on August 24, 2020. He recommended that the tree be removed and be replaced with one small or medium size tree. He also recommended that the three other street trees on the property be professionally maintained. Bill Oetinger made a motion to approve the removal and replacement. Parker Smith seconded, and the motion was approved.

- **110 Yorke Ave.**

The property owner requested the removal of a black locust. The borough arborist visited the property on July 28, 2020. The tree is in severe decline and presents a current risk of limb failure. He recommended that the tree be removed. Bill Oetinger made a motion to approve the removal and replace it with one large tree. Harry Schmidt 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**

Wayne Hoffman requested an update on the status of the draft tree ordinance. Peter Burke reported it is with legal counsel for review and input.

Mr. Hoffman suggested the prior to construction, contractors complete a permit for tree removal. That way the borough would know how many trees are on the property and can plan for replacements.

- **Wilbraham Park Benches**

Peter Burke reported that the benches are all assembled and installation in the park has begun.

- **Tree Inventory**

Susan Hoffman reported that the three contractors have submitted bids to perform the tree inventory.

- **Fall Tree Planting**

Currently, there are requests for eight trees.

- **Vine Clearing**

A date of September 29, 2020 was set for the vine clearing. Volunteers will meet at borough hall and bring their own tools.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Tomato and Lima Bean Festivals**

Feedback from vendors at the Tomato Festival was positive. They liked the open space afforded from the new location and described the crowd as moderate but acceptable.

Festival coordinators are investigating ways to accommodate more vendors for the Lima Bean Festival.

OTHER

- Bill Oetinger asked about the status of two items from previous meetings.

Tree removal at Bayshore – Wayne Hoffman reported that the tree was dead and was removed by the contractor prior to receiving the official approval from the Shade Tree Commission. The zoning official recommended that the contractor not be cited due to multiple violations at the site.

RFP for contracted tree services for the borough – Susan Hoffman reported that Matt Notch had agreed to investigate the RFP used by the City of Cape May. Bill Oetinger will follow up with Matt.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hoffman, Secretary