

CRANBURY TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 4, 2020

The regular meeting of the Shade Tree Commission of the Township of Cranbury was held at 10:00 a.m. by remote access videoconferencing in response to COVID-19 and the updated Open Public Meeting Act guidelines.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Ms. Kathy Easton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m., and Jean Golisano acted as Recording Secretary of the meeting.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) was provided on December 16, 2019 of this meeting's date, time and place, and the agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice, and filed with the Municipal Clerk. Notification of remote access meetings going forward until further notice was posted on the Township website on April 24, 2020, and sent to the Trenton Times, Homes News and Cranbury Press on May 1, 2020

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kathy Easton, Jessica Irons, Jackie Johnson, Bonnie Larson and Lee Nissen were present.

NONMEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Barbara Rogers, Liaison

MINUTES

The amended minutes of the February 6, 2020 meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Easton, and seconded by Ms. Larson. On a voice vote of all members present, the February 6th Minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP)

Volunteer Work Hours – For the February 7, 2020 to June 4, 2020 time period, STC members reported the following volunteer hours: Ms. Easton – 21.5; Ms. Johnson – 9.5; and Ms. Larson – 9.5; Ms. Nissen – 1.5; Ms. Irons – 2.5 volunteer hours. Ms. Easton reported she received two CEUs for the AAR webinar and also the Tree City Webinar. She stated she also earned 1 NJUCF CE unit for attending a NJFA webinar titled Invasive Forest Pests. Ms. Johnson reported she received one CEU unit for a NJFA webinar class titled Impact of Deer on Flora & Fauna.

Ms. Irons reported she was supposed to attend the core training; however, it was cancelled because of COVID. She reported she received materials, which she will review which will count for volunteer hours. Ms. Irons stated the core training may be rescheduled, or perhaps courses will be offered on line.

CFMP Objectives and Tasks

Ms. Easton the Community Forestry Plan would be discussed later in the agenda.

2020 Budget

Ms. Easton reported the budget was passed in April and is still intact since no funds have been spent. The budget can be removed off future Agendas.

Four Seasons Planting

Ms. Johnson reported the trees planted in Four Seasons are doing well. Only one of the 18 trees planted in 2018 had to be replaced. Only one tree needed replacing from the 37 planted in 2019.

Community Education Program

Ms. Easton stated the education program will be temporarily put on hold due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions. Members discussed possible projects for children for the fall.

"No Plant" and Exhibit Lists Status

Ms. Easton reported the lists are being used and stated she and Ms. Johnson will work on checking the lists for accuracy and to update information.

NEW BUSINESS

Tree Inquiries

Ms. Easton reported she had several tree inquiries. She reported the tree planted near the 1700's house in Millstone Park will be replaced as it is not a seedless Sweet Gum tree. She also responded to an inquiry about a Bradford Pear tree on Main Street on the corner of Plainsboro Road. The tree is in very bad shape and has limbs through the wires. Ms. Easton reported Public Works stated the tree is not in the right of way. She stated she is not sure if the tree was planted by the Township. She suggested the resident contact the utility company due to the wires.

Ms. Easton reported a tree request at 63 South Main Street and stated 61 South Main Street had also previously requested a tree. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Easton will go back to survey the area and she will respond to the resident.

Dr. Rogers reported a resident at 14 Bergen had a tree removed due to oak leaf scorch last year and now has another tree, which she would also like removed. Ms. Easton will check it; however, it is believed the tree is not in the ROW and the home belongs to an HOA.

Ms. Johnson reported two inquiries in Four Seasons. She stated the new maple trees have purple border leaf spot, which is a cosmetic disease that affects maples. Ms. Easton stated since it is cosmetic and not structural, Shade Tree will not be addressing it. Ms. Johnson stated she wanted the members to be aware of it. Ms. Easton requested Ms. Johnson bring it to LMS landscaper's attention since they are guaranteeing the trees. Ms. Johnson also reported an oak tree that is diseased. The tree is one of the original oaks in 4 Seasons. The center of the tree is dead. Ms. Johnson will seek additional information on it.

Dr. Rogers inquired about the trees and sidewalks on Silvers Lane, stating a resident made inquiries at the Township Committee meeting. Ms. Easton stated the wrong trees had been planted in the strips. The residents will have to cover the costs as Silvers Lane belongs to an HOA. New planted trees will require root guards. This item will be an action item at a future TC meeting. Ms. Easton offered to attend the meeting if she is needed.

Main Street Tree Planting 2020

Ms. Easton reported she and Ms. Johnson reviewed the Empty Hole Survey updated by Ms. Larson and Ms. Nissen in 2017. She stated the determined there are many locations on Main Street where trees cannot be planted, either because there is no room, already planted, or overhead wires. She reported six locations where trees can be planted; root guards will be needed. There is a \$10,000 budget for tree planting, and Ms. Easton stated locations on side streets (Park Place and Westminster) will be looked at next.

Website Page Review

Ms. Easton requested members review the Shade Tree website for accuracy. Any discrepancies should be reported to her or Ms. Golisano for updating. Ms. Easton and Ms. Johnson will review and update the "No Plant" List.

Tree Pruning in Village Park

Ms. Easton reported she will look more closely at the trees in Village Park. She will call three contractors to come look at the trees there to determine what work needs to be done. Ms. Easton also noted there are several trees located around the 1700's historic home in Millstone Park that will need attention or removal for safety reasons, especially if volunteers and residents will be near the home. Ms. Easton requested a member walk with her in Village and Millstone Parks to determine what work needs to be done.

Heritage Tree Ordinance

Ms. Easton stated this ordinance will be tabled until a future meeting. Ms. Irons offered to do some research on heritage tree ordinances. Ms. Easton stated other townships have ordinances that could also be looked at.

Tree Inventory

Members discussed the many environment benefits realized from trees, including the effects of carbon storage, and air and hydrology benefits. Ms. Johnson stated she has websites to share. Ms. Johnson stated there are Excel spreadsheets that can be used to do the inventory. There are websites that can calculate the benefits from tree canopies, including I-Tree Canopy.

Shade Tree Banner

Ms. Golisano will inquire about the logos permitted on the banner. The purchase of the banner is included in this year's budget.

Education

Members discussed education opportunities and the availability of webinars for CEUs. Members agreed workshops are not feasible at this time, so Ms. Eaton encouraged members to take advantage of any education opportunities.

Girl Scout Merit Badges

Ms. Irons reported the Girl Scouts are offering online badges for free. She reported several girls are working on a tree merit badge

Summary of "To Do" Action Items

1. Salem tree seedling – On hold as the seedling was never received.
2. Ms. Larson and Ms. Nissen will work on getting Township e-mail access.
3. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Irons will look at tree inventory options.
4. Ms. Easton will check Village Park. Another member is welcome to walk the Park also.

5. Ms. Easton and Ms. Johnson will walk the Preserve and note any tree issues. Ms. Easton stated the Preserve needs a lot of work.
6. Ms. Easton and Ms. Irons will monitor the web page.
7. Ms. Easton and Ms. Johnson will continue to do tree inventory.
8. Ms. Irons will research Heritage Tree Ordinances

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, motion duly made by Ms. Easton, seconded by Ms. Larson and carried, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed Secretary of the Cranbury Township Shade Tree Commission, and that this document, consisting of four (4) pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the monthly meeting held on June 4, 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 10th day of September, 2020.

Jean Golisano

Jean Golisano
Board Secretary