

CRANBURY TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MINUTES

November 10, 2020

The regular meeting of the Shade Tree Commission of the Township of Cranbury was held on November 10, 2020 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 10:00 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, and Lee Nissen were present. Bonnie Larson was excused.

NONMEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Barbara Rogers, Township Committee Liaison

MINUTES

The Minutes of the September 9, 2020 meetings were approved on a motion by Ms. Easton, and seconded by Ms. Johnson. On a voice vote, with all members present agreeing, the September 9th Minutes were approved. The Minutes of the October 1, 2020 meetings were approved on a motion by Ms. Easton, and seconded by Ms. Johnson. On a voice vote, with all members present agreeing, the October 1st Minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP)

Volunteer Work Hours – For the September 9th to November 10th time period, STC members reported the following volunteer hours: Ms. Easton – 37 (4 CEUs); Ms. Johnson – 10.5 (7 CEUs); and Ms. Larson - xx; Ms. Nissen – 1.5; Ms. Irons – 19.5 (10 CEUs) volunteer hours.

Community Education Program

Ms. Easton stated the education program will be temporarily put on hold due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions.

"No Plant" and Exhibit Lists Status

Ms. Easton requested members review the lists and bring any changes/corrections to the February meeting. She and Ms. Johnson will also work on checking the lists for accuracy and to update information. Ms. Golisano will check the lists, reformat and delete any blank worksheets.

Website Page Review

Ms. Easton requested members review the Shade Tree web page for content accuracy. Updated links will be posted for the emerald ash borer and lanternfly. Information should also be posted that residents may consult Cranbury Shade Tree Commission for guidance on the planting of trees and tree maintenance. Ms. Golisano will edit the list of documents posted.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget

Members discussed and agreed on the 2021 budget.

Tree Inventory

Ms. Easton stated the rights-of-way for trees needs to be defined so trees can be identified as being Township or homeowner trees. Ms. Johnson requested quotes from two contractors. Only one, Sav-A-Tree, submitted a quote for \$2,000 for trees on Main Street and cross streets off Main Street. Members agreed to budget \$4,000 for the tree inventory.

Tree Maintenance

Ms. Easton stated a fair number of Main Street trees need attention. Trees are currently being trimmed by the utility company. Members agreed that \$20,000 (\$5,000 more than the 2020 budget) was reasonable for tree maintenance. Ms. Johnson reported it is important that for the first five years of a tree being planted, it needs to be pruned by trained pruners/arborists. Ms. Easton stated the Public Works employees are not trained tree pruners, and young trees need structural pruning. Dr. Rogers inquired why a DPW employee could not be trained to prune, which would have money in the long run. Ms. Easton reported she suggested that in the past; however, an expert arborist is preferred. She stated she will talk to the TC when she presents the Shade Tree annual report. Dr. Rogers stated she wants to do the best for the trees and the budget. Ms. Easton agreed that Shade Tree wants to be respectful of the budget.

Main Street Planting

Ms. Easton reported Sunset Creation's quote was accepted and six trees will be planted on Main Street soon. She reported the trees will be inspected before they are planted.

Tree Inquiries

Ms. Easton stated she had an inquiry about the oak trees on the corner of Prospect Street and Plainsboro Road.

Memorial Tree

Ms. Easton reported information on the memorial tree has been presented to the Parks Commission because a memorial plaque will be involved. She stated she will arrange to meet with a member of Parks and the Cranbury Historic and Preservation about planting a tree near the historic 1700s house in Millstone Park. While the West Windsor resident would like the memorial tree to be an American Beech, members agreed it may grow too wide to be planted in the Park and will instead be some sort of native tree. The tree will not be planted until the spring, and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Spotted Lanternfly

Ms. Irons and Ms. Easton will work on obtaining updated spotted lanternfly information to be posted on the Township website. Members agreed Shade Tree should alert residents to the damage caused by the spotted lanternfly.

Tree Pruning in Village and Millstone Parks

Ms. Easton reported the tree pruning and maintenance work should start soon in Village and Millstone Parks. Due to the warm weather, trees have not yet gone dormant so the pruning has been delayed. Ms. Golisano will advise Finance to encumber the funds in case the pruning does not start until 2021. Dr. Rogers suggested notified homeowners that now is a good time to prune trees. Ms. Johnson stated trees should be limbed up so trucks do not hit and break the branches. Ms. Easton stated dead or dying branches should be removed as soon as possible for the health of the tree, and pruning should be done in the winter when the trees are dormant. Dr. Rogers stated it would be beneficial to send information about tree care to homeowners and members agreed additional links including composting leaves, would also be helpful.

Heritage Tree Ordinance

The Heritage Tree Ordinance will be addressed next year. A request will be made to have funds allocated in next year's budget for this ordinance.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Irons reported that all presentations from this year's conference will be posted on line for the next year, and while credit is only given while watching the presentation live, there is a lot of information posted for members who may have missed the conference.

An inquiry for a project was received from a Girl Scout leader. Shade Tree members and Dr. Rogers agreed that an environmental education sign, such as updating the kiosk, would be an ideal project.

Summary of "To Do" Action Items

1. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Irons – continue to look at tree inventory options and get estimates.
2. Ms. Irons and Ms. Easton – edit and complete the website.
3. Ms. Easton – memorial tree request

Ms. Easton requested Ms. Golisano send the action items to the members

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, motion duly made by Ms. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Nissen and carried, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 11:25 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 November 10, 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 4th day of February, 2021.

Jean Golisano
Board Secretary