

CRANBURY TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 6, 2019

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

A meeting of the Cranbury Township Shade Tree Commission was held in the Gourgaud Gallery in Town Hall, 23A North Main Street, Cranbury, on June 6, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Kathy Easton called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., and Jean Golisano acted as the 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 20, 2018, 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.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kathy Easton, Jackie Johnson, Bonnie Larson and Lee Nissen were present. Norma Swale was absent.

Ms. Easton announced that due to an imminent move to a community outside of Cranbury, Ms. Swale has vacated her term (term expires December 31, 2019). Ms. Easton will notify the Clerk to post the vacancy. Ms. Easton stated Ms. Jessica Irons was present at the meeting and had expressed an interest in joining Shade Tree.

Non-member in attendance

Kevin Van Hise, Esq., Township Attorney
Jessica Irons – Cranbury resident

MINUTES

The Minutes of the April 4, 2019 meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Easton; seconded by Ms. Johnson. On a voice vote of all members present, the April 4th minutes were approved.

The Minutes of the April 10, 2019 meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Easton; seconded by Ms. Johnson. On a voice vote of all members present, the April 10th minutes were approved.

Shade Tree Roles and Responsibilities

Ms. Easton stated the order of the agenda would be changed and introduced Mr. Kevin Van Hise, Esq., Township Attorney, to discuss with the Shade Tree members the

roles and responsibilities of the Commission. Mr. Van Hise was holding similar discussions with all Township Boards and Commission. Shade Tree is a commission, and as such, has real powers and has jurisdiction over shade trees along and in the rights-of-way on Township roads, public spaces and Township parks. Middlesex County does not have a Shade Tree Commission so the power has been referred to Cranbury Shade Tree Commission. Shade Tree has broad powers which include the planting, health and maintenance of trees as well as activities such as an Arbor Day Celebration. Ms. Easton inquired why Shade Tree does not receive plans for developments when they are planting trees in the ROW. Mr. Van Hise explained that the ordinance specifies it is a function of the Planning and Zoning Boards to evaluate plans and Shade Tree is not in the process. Ms. Easton pointed out it is important to monitor trees planted because of disease. Mr. Van Hise suggested Ms. Easton talk to the Township Administrator concerning the process. Mr. Van Hise stated the current ordinance wording be changed from a "recommended list" of trees to instead include mandatory language. There was additional discussion about the determination of ROWs done by the Public Works Manager (a street-by-street determination), impact of trees on sidewalks and the education of landscapers. Mr. Van Hise recommended always involving the Township Administrator on issues with homeowners.

OLD BUSINESS

Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP)

Volunteer Work Hours – For the April 5th to June 6th time period, STC members reported the following volunteer hours: Ms. Easton – 40.5; Ms. Johnson – 8.5; and Ms. Larson – 6.5 volunteer hours.

Coordination with Parks and DPW

Ms. Easton stated Shade Tree will continue to coordinate with the Parks Commission and the DPW concerning tree maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS

Do Not Plant List/Exhibit List Review

Additional work on the list will be at a Special Meeting scheduled for August 8, 2019 at 9 a.m.

Four Seasons Planting

The spring planting has been delayed. The contractor was not going to hand dig the trees, and there was concern the machinery would damage the irrigation system. Currently LMS is having difficulty provided the species requested and has no offered substitutes. Ms. Easton will follow up with LMS and will copy Ms. Johnson.

Eighteen trees were planted in the fall in Four Seasons, and Ms. Johnson is monitoring them. Ms. Easton suggested Four Seasons be contacted if any trees need to be replaced because they may have purchased an extended guarantee. Ms. Johnson reported a dead tree in the Hagerty cul-de-sac. She will e-mail the information to Mr. Jerry Thorne to see if it is a Township or Four Seasons tree.

Arbor Day Tree – She reported the Arbor Day Celebration was held inside the Cranbury School because of inclement weather. The students created posters listing tree attributes,

sang a song and recited a poem. A crabapple tree was on display in the School for the celebration and was later planted in Village Park.

Sustainable Jersey Recertification - Ms. Easton explained that every three years Shade Tree reaffirms its 30% canopy goal for the Township. On a motion by Ms. Easton, seconded by Ms. Larson, with all present in favor, the Commission reaffirmed the Township's canopy goal of 30%. Ms. Easton submitted the additional information for the Sustainability Report to Dr. Barbara Rogers. Information submitted earns sustainable points which increase the Township's eligibility to obtain grants.

Tree Inquiries – Ms. Easton reported a tree inquiry for 14 Bergen Drive. She stated there are many poorly-planted pin oaks in the neighborhood that are in very bad shape. Ms. Easton stated it is important that going forward Shade Tree have a say in what trees are planted.

Training and Continuing Education – The members discussed possible topics for a Shade Tree program and agreed the program would be held in the fall. The program, to be called "Tree Facts" will focus on general education about trees, will introduce the "Do Not Plant List" and have a Q&A period. Ms. Easton stated she will call the Library to possibly schedule October 16th at 7 p.m.

Workshop Training – Ms. Easton will pursue a pruning workshop in September. Ms. Johnson also reported Rutgers offers core training for new Shade Tree Members.

Special Meeting on August 8, 2019 - The next regularly-scheduled Shade Tree Meeting is September 5th. The members decided to schedule a Special Meeting on August 8th at 9:00 a.m. to prepare for Cranbury Day, discuss Community Education Program in September and complete further work on the "Do Not Plant List."

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, motion duly made by Ms. Easton, seconded by Ms. Johnson, and carried, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 11:30 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 three (3) pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the monthly meeting held on June 6, 2019.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 5th day of September, 2019.

Jean Golisano

Jean Golisano
Board Secretary