

Fair Haven Shade Tree Commission (“STC”) 2023 Annual Report

2023 Commission Members

Chris Larsen, Chairman
Michael D'Angelo, Vice Chairman
Bonnie Torcivia
Chris McCabe
Jill Sullivan

Mike Hoey
Leah Beganie
Peter D'Agati
Kevin McGovern

2023 Borough Liaison: Councilwoman Tracy Cole & Councilwoman Laline Neff

2023 Borough Secretary to STC: Krystie Larsen

Mission Statement

Fair Haven trees are an important resource for all of our residents. The trees' presence is aesthetically pleasing, is beneficial to our physical and mental health, adds value to our properties, and supports the overall wellbeing of the varied ecosystems which surround our Borough. It is our mission to preserve, protect and expand this urban forest in order that these benefits will still be available to future generations. To this end, we will develop a healthy, safe and sustainable shade tree inventory in the public areas of our municipality. With a focus on the systematic protection of existing and new plantings, we will work to maximize the environmental and socio-economic benefits of our community trees while minimizing the cost and liability associated with poor quality inventory.

Accomplishments of 2023

1. Awarded 2023 NJUCF Stewardship Grant: STC researched the benefits, feasibility, and costs associated with conducting a borough-wide public tree inventory with the inclusion of a web-based software package for tree management. As a result of this process, the Borough engaged Licensed Tree Expert CME Associates to assist with a grant application to fund this project. In October, Fair Haven was awarded \$15,000 to be used for a Tree Inventory, which will be a requirement in its' Community Forestry Management Plan due in December 2024.
2. A Tree Planting Commission
 - a. Created a Resident Tree Buying Program in partnership with Fernbrook Nursery. 56 new trees were planted in Fair Haven in September. Due to the success, STC plans to continue this program.
 - b. Sponsored a Tree Giveaway: STC members voted on a property to donate a tree from the Shade Tree Trust Fund, which was planted on Lake Avenue in September.
 - c. Created a Kwanzan Cherry Tree Program: to continue the iconic look down Fair Haven Road and promote its mission as a tree planting Commission. Two Kwanzan Cherry trees were planted on Fair Haven Road in September.
3. Community Engagement
 - a. Distributed Doorhangers with tree facts and information to every household in Fair Haven to build community awareness about tree health and importance.
 - b. Participated in Love Where You Live Day by handing out educational materials and raffling off a tree.
 - c. Engaged Sickles and Knollwood students with Arbor Day activities and a poster contest.
 - d. STC online presence has grown to 173 followers on social media.
 - e. Began evaluating options for a new Fair Haven Christmas Tree.

4. Training and Development

- a. Fair Haven maintained its accreditations with Tree City USA and New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry.
- b. Two new STC members were CORE trained by NJUCF.
- c. Fair Haven earned 16 CEU credits (vs. 8 required) in 2023, including 9 credits earned by attending the Shade Tree Federation Conference.

Requests of Fair Haven Borough Council for 2024

1. Attention to the Tree Preservation Ordinance. STC began working on this Ordinance in 2021 and would like to see the amendments introduced as soon as possible.
2. Community Management Forestry Plan: STC just received updated guidelines from NJUCF so it may begin updating the foundational Community Management Forestry Plan for Fair Haven. The Borough's plan expires December 31, 2024 and will require professional assistance to complete. The Commission may apply for a grant to help fund this plan update, or may need Council support to fund this in order to remain in compliance.
3. Policy Recommendation: STC has discussed tree removal replacement requirements for private residents as well as on public lands. STC recommends that the same code apply to public and private lands: if a tree is removed, it should be replaced. To that end, STC recommends the Borough add a budget line item for tree plantings and replacements on public lands, not only removals.
4. Other Recommendation: STC members attended multiple trainings this year and recommends DPW/Municipal staff attend formal trainings/conferences relating to trees as well (Shade Tree Federation, NJUCF CEU trainings). STC hopes to work closer with DPW/Engineering staff relating to tree planting and removal on public lands.
5. Budget Request: In 2023 the STC budget was \$12,660; 65% was allocated to Borough Tree Experts Bill Brooks and Shari Spero to process tree removal permits and consulting matters. STC expects their consulting budget line to increase due to the change in Licensed Tree Expert and their higher fees. A 2% increase for the remainder of the STC operating budget to cover training/CEU expenses, community engagement and awareness endeavors, and tree planting projects including a new Christmas tree is sufficient. Additional funds requested are as follows:
 - a. \$5,000-\$6,000 to update the Community Forestry Management Plan, in order for STC to remain compliant.
 - b. Once established, the tree inventory will have a perpetual annual software cost of \$3,600 plus \$750 for web based training or \$1800 for onsite training.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Larsen, Chairman