

# FAIR HAVEN SHADE TREE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

November 1, 2023, 7:30pm HYBRID: In person at Borough Hall and via Zoom

1. Call to Order @ 7:33pm

2. Sunshine Law Notice, C. Larsen

3. Roll Call:

Present: Christian Larsen, Michael D'Angelo, Leah Beganie, Peter D'Agati, Kevin McGovern, Bonnie Torcivia, Councilwoman Cole, Borough Secretary Krystie Larsen

Absent: Michael Hoey, Christopher McCabe, Jill Sullivan, Councilwoman Neff

4. Pledge of Allegiance

5. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (October 4, 2023): Approved, all in Favor.

6. Recognition of Community Appeal Donation: C. Larsen thanked the residents of Fair Haven for their generous support during the Community Appeal. \$2,430 will be deposited in the Shade Tree Trust.

7. Project Updates

a. Updates from Borough Tree Specialist: Bill Brooks

No new updates on Ash Borer disease, looks like it will die out. Ash trees that survive over the next three years will be surprising. Bacterial Leaf scorch is expected to persist in our area. Unfortunately all research currently being conducted by universities and tree experts is not very promising. County tree work will begin on Ridge Road soon. JCP&L circuit work likely occurring after March 1, 2024. B. Torcivia suggested meeting with the new JCP&L staff to build a relationship. B. Brooks updated the Commission about a residential tree permit in question for a municipal tree in Borough right of way; N. Poruchynsky gave approval. B. Brooks suggested changing the removal policy for extenuating circumstances for safety/hazard reasons. Regarding the potential new Christmas tree, B. Brooks warned on timing of planting and advised STC that a large hole should be dug, remove the dirt and replace with farm soil for a better foundational planting.

b. NJUCF Tree Inventory Grant: Jill Sullivan

In J. Sullivan's absence, C. Larsen gave her update:

On October 16th we were notified that Fair Haven was awarded the 2023 NJUCF Stewardship Grant in the full amount requested, \$15,000. We will now begin the work of completing the tree inventory. Now that the grant has been awarded we need to start tracking all hours associated with any work as it relates to this project. We can start with this meeting. Going forward, any time spent thinking, meeting, designing, emailing, etc. as it relates to the canopy/inventory please track so that we can accurately count towards our matching requirement. We need to complete this work by October 2025. I will have more time to shift focus to this in the coming weeks so look for a more detailed update next month. But this is very good news!

I reached out to Fernbrook this week to confirm that we are interested in doing another tree-buying program this spring and to inquire about a timeline. Here is her response: "First we will need to get a planting list to you by the new year and you will have a few months to get the word out. We will need to have your plant list by mid-March to be sure we have everything dug for the planting date. Lastly we will not be able to plant trees until mid-May of 2024. We will need to get thru all of our digging and shipping to our wholesale customers before we plant." Unfortunately, that means we won't

be able to target planting for Arbor Day as Bonnie suggested in the last meeting. I also inquired about their larger-sized Christmas-type evergreen trees based on conversations from the last 2 STC meetings (finally). She will work on getting us pricing/options for potential 2024 planting. I will connect Mike to my contact at Fernbrook.

Councilwoman Cole noted the Borough will have to do a RFP to solicit proposals for the tree inventory, which will be evaluated by Council.

c. Shade Tree Federation Conference, Green Team and Natural Area Update: Bonnie Torcivia

B. Torcivia advised that the Green Team did a rain garden clean up at Knollwood School with the Junior Green Team. The Natural Area Committee is planning a volunteer weekend November 18-19, focused near the cell tower/church. Shade Tree Federation Conference was great- lots of good speakers and information. She suggested annual attendance at the conference by STC members and DPW staff. She spoke with NJUCF staff who advised CFMP guidelines are expected to be released by the first quarter of 2024. She said a key takeaway was that the value of creating and using a tree inventory is very important.

d. Community Outreach: Leah Beganie

L. Beganie advised STC has 176 followers on social media. She suggested making a thank you post for Community Appeal donations. B. Torcivia suggested public education about a tree inventory and piggyback on overall tree care education.

e. Christmas Tree Replacement: Mike Hoey

Absent.

f. Salem Oak Trees: Bonnie Torcivia

Councilwoman Cole updated the Commission that the Salem Oak memo was received by Council and approved. The Engineering and DPW Committee meeting is tomorrow and she will revisit markouts and report back. B. Torcivia is looking at attractive fencing options to protect the trees. Various Shade Tree Members volunteered to help with the planting. B. Torcivia will schedule the planting with Principal Schwartz so students may be involved at Sickles School.

g. McCarter Park Tree Removal: Mike D'Angelo

A concerned citizen approached M. D'Angelo about tree removal in McCarter Park. Councilwoman Cole believes tree removal in public spaces should be reported to STC prior to finalized plans for removal. She is interested in the data of how much money is spent on tree removal by the Borough versus planting trees. B. Torcivia suggested repurposing old trees that have to be removed for safety reasons i.e. tables, benches, etc.

h. Tree Removal Permit Data: Krystie Larsen

K. Larsen shared tree removal permit data with the Commission.

i. STC Annual Report & Budget: Chris Larsen

K. Larsen shared a draft Annual Report and asked STC members to send any edits. Councilwoman Cole suggested adding a mapping mechanism along with all the tools used by STC to provide recommendations to Council (permit data, expert resources, programs). B. Torcivia suggested calculating Fair Haven's canopy so STC can figure out its planting goals. B.

Torcivia noted \$22-23 million is available in grant funding for tree planting through the Inflation Reduction Act. Councilwoman Cole does not believe Fair Haven is eligible until Fair Haven's Tree Inventory is complete.

Regarding budget, C. Larsen suggested increasing the training budget line item since 2023 was barely enough funds. All members in favor.

B. Torcivia asked how replanting is enforced on public and private lands. K. Larsen noted on private tree permits, replacement requirements are detailed in letters to homeowners.

#### j. Council and Tree Preservation Ordinance Update: Councilwoman Cole

Councilwoman Cole advised there is a two month timeline for an Ordinance, so the Tree Preservation Ordinance will not be introduced in 2023 (an ordinance can not carry over calendar years). C. Larsen asked who would represent the Tree Conservation Officer per the new Ordinance? Councilwoman Cole said it would be a consultant. Should an appeal take place, the applicant would pay for that professional. B. Torcivia would like to educate the public about the importance of the Tree Preservation Ordinance.

#### 8. Proposed New Agenda Items

- Tree Canopy and Equity Data
- STC Budget Update

#### 9. Public Participation

Mark Olson, Cambridge Avenue, asked STC if they were aware of the McCarter Park tree removals? Mr. Olson spoke to a Borough DPW worker who responded that there was no replacement plan for these trees and new trees have not been planted in the Borough in five years. Mr. Olson would like the Borough to be accountable for replacement of public trees that are removed. He said it is a problem that the Borough does not have a tree planting budget. He believes there needs to be a mechanism in place to budget for replacements as well as removals. Councilwoman Cole noted in some other municipalities, tree planting occurs as part of municipal road projects. B. Torcivia would like STC to make it a goal to work closer with DPW on this process. Councilwoman Cole suggested setting up systems so these triggers are in place automatically. K. Larsen noted she forwards planned tree work reports that she receives from Engineer Poruchynsky (on public land) to STC upon receipt; the Frontier report of these planned removals was sent to STC in September. P. D'Agati asked if it is possible for STC to review potential public tree work before the Borough contracts the job? Councilwoman Cole suggested that STC make any policy change recommendations in its Annual Plan.

Carolyn Ferguson, Chair of Natural Area Committee, believes it is appropriate for the Borough to follow the same Tree removal code as private residents, as the Borough is the largest landowner in Fair Haven. If private residents must replace trees, so should the Borough. She encouraged the Shade Tree Commission to ask for an increase in its planting budget for 2024. Monmouth County Parks has been a great resource for the Natural Area, highlighting invasive trees: there is a scale and perhaps it would be better to have that tree vs. no tree. She suggested when thanking residents for the Community Appeal donations, to continue contributing.

M. D'Angelo is interested in seeing hard numbers/data on Fair Haven's tree canopy in order to base decisions on facts versus speculation. Then STC can create a plan and track its goals and progress. He noted the Borough and Commission have an idea of removals, but he believes there are also voluntary plantings occurring that are not tracked. C. Larsen believes the Tree Inventory will provide a lot of useful tools for calculating tree data. He requested Borough Tree Removal costs over the last five years.

K. Larsen noted Shade Tree has a \$3,500 planting budget in 2023. B. Torcivia believes STC should use that budget to plant trees on public lands by year end 2023. K. Larsen referred to an email from M. Hoey about using the funds for the potential new Borough Christmas Tree, since that is a planting on public land. C. Larsen asked what temporary budget will be in place until the Council passes an approved budget? Councilwoman Cole noted the temporary budget should not affect STC work; budget requests and plans should be detailed in the Annual Plan. M. D'Angelo does not want to rush and spend the budget haphazardly, as the unused funds will go to other Borough purposes. K. McGovern agreed and suggested mapping out a 2024 planting plan early in the year. L. Beganie asked for the STC budget to be included at STC meetings.

10. Adjournment @ 9:46 pm

***\*\* Next Shade Tree Commission Meeting is December 6, 2023\*\****