

FAIR HAVEN SHADE TREE COMMISSION (“STC”) MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 3, 2021, 7:30pm via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85047561178>

1. Call to Order 7:33pm

2. Sunshine Law Notice, D. Paolo

3. Roll Call

Present: Beganie, D’Agati, D’Angelo, McCabe, Larsen, Paolo, Reid, Sullivan, Councilwoman Laline Neff, Mayor Halpern, Borough Liaison Krystie Larsen

4. Pledge of Allegiance

5. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (October 6, 2021): D. Paolo made a motion to approve, L. Beganie second. All in favor to approve.

6. Project Updates

a. Salem White Oak Seedlings (Paolo)

D. Paolo is still working with the Rec Committee to find a permanent home for the tree. The priority is to protect it for the winter with burlap screening and keep it outside. D. Paolo is concerned that the leaf color is changing and hopes it is seasonal and not the bacterial leaf scorch that is going around.

b. Green Initiative (Reid)

- Fair Haven Fields cleanup day postponed due to weather, now November 13. Natural Area cleanup also that day, so hoping to capitalize on volunteers
- Recycling Town Hall/mini Environmental Day: timing November or TBD. Will include Mazza recycling, composting best practices and STC can have a presence.
- Junior Green Team launching at Knollwood. Can possibly include a partnership with STC once up and running.
- Currently reviewing the Green Team scope and mission overall

D. Paolo asked for the history of the Green Team and how it started. Councilwoman Neff explained she started it with Ralph Wyndrum in 2017 as a means to partner with Sustainable Jersey. A Green Team needs to be certified through Sustainable Jersey in order to be eligible for grants and earn “points/actions”. Thus far, Green Team has been awarded two grants towards the rain gardens at Knollwood School and the water dispensers at Fair Haven Fields. Last year a more formal Green Team was approved by Mayor Luccarelli. Currently approximately 12 volunteers are involved.

c. Social Media (Beganie)

L. Beganie created a fall tree care and Community Appeal graphic for social media. She asked for comments and D. Paolo suggested adding verbiage to the Community Appeal post to highlight new STC initiatives so people know where their money is going. J. Sullivan suggested adding a post for the Natural Area and Field cleanup November 13/14. P. D'Agati will forward information regarding the spotted lantern fly to post after his training this week.

d. Tree Inventory (Sullivan)

J. Sullivan had an initial conversation with Borough Tree Specialist Bill Brooks and learned this Tree Inventory Project is a very large time commitment and will require many volunteers. Red Bank completed the project in two years, volunteers working 4 hours every Saturday and Sunday. In Fair Haven, this may take longer depending on manpower. There is a helpful Hazard Tree Course available; it is expensive, but it makes sense for more than one person to be trained. J. Sullivan believes involving all community members and targeting the RFH Environmental Club (age 15+) would be beneficial. She spoke with the environmental studies teacher at RFH in charge of the Club and he is very keen on helping with this project. D. Paolo believes this project is very important, as many grants require a Tree Inventory to be considered. The project has to start somewhere and he believes Borough parks and right of way areas should be first. Councilwoman Neff echoed the significance of this project and asked to be included as a volunteer as well.

e. Administrative – CEU's/Five Year Plan (Paolo)

STC is in need of six more CEU credits by the end of the year. C. Larsen and L. Beganie had issues with the input code for credit. D. Paolo will follow-up with Emily Farschon at the DEP for clarification. Rutgers Continuing Ed has one hour webinars that should count. Public attendees/community members may also take these classes and credit would be issued.

f. Tree Giveaway Update (Paolo)

No new updates – it will be a spring planting. In January, the Commission should start thinking about a 2022 giveaway. If the Community Appeal funds allow, perhaps STC can give away more than one tree.

g. Plaque at Denormandie Park (Reid)

A. Reid reported that the tree nominator, Wendy, is happy to help with the plaque and language. She advised waiting because the tree may be raised to a prestigious "heritage tree" title, so does not want to pinpoint "signature tree" just yet. She is also measuring the Hance Road oak tree for possibly another winner.

h. Sickles and Knollwood Tree Giveaway (Sullivan)

J. Sullivan spoke with Superintendent McNeil regarding the tree giveaway for Sickles and Knollwood Schools. He is still interested in the initiative, but with construction still ongoing at Sickles School, he would like to table the project until Spring.

i. Kwanzan Cherry Tree Giveaway on Fair Haven Road

D. Paolo discussed the long-term vision of continuing the planting of Kwanzan Cherry Trees along Fair Haven Road as a legacy project. J. Sullivan noted the size would match the replacement trees planned for the southern end of Fair Haven Road. L. Beganie asked of any sidewalk plans for Fair Haven Road, as that should be considered. Councilwoman Neff does not know of any sidewalk plans. Sullivan commented the existing sidewalks on Fair Haven Road were to connect McCarter Park to McCarter Pond. D. D'Agati will research this project further.

j. Tree Ordinance Review (D'Angelo)

M. D'Angelo reviewed the Fair Haven and Rumson tree ordinances and highlighted disparities, as recommended by Borough Tree Specialist Bill Brooks. Three tenants of proposed change include:

1. A more equitable fee schedule between builders and residents for removal of trees. Allows builders to clear cut lots for a max of \$150 (\$25 per tree).
2. Address the building envelope: more input from Land Use/Tree Specialist at the beginning of the process, so the proposed new structures such as driveways, sheds, etc. do not damage roots and then become a hazard tree.
3. Timing of submission for Tree Removal Applications: Disconnect between evaluation/approval and tree removal occurring.

Targeting a January 2022 ordinance update. Should improve the process with Tree Specialist so the Borough has recourse if trees are not replaced. B. Brooks will attend December 1 STC meeting to further discuss and will review with Borough Administrator and Clerk.

M. D'Angelo believes that although STC mission is for public trees, he believes STC has the responsibility of beautification and safety of trees in the town overall and that STC should make a recommendation to Mayor and Council. L. Neff offered to help write the ordinance and/or attend any additional meetings needed. She cited some changes will be made in Zoning Ordinances, based on the joint public Land Use meeting last week. She asked if STC should work with Land Use committee on this together or recommend STC ordinance changes, knowing there may be additional changes from Planning and Zoning in the future? D'Angelo would recommend updating the Tree Ordinance based on the three tenants above first, understanding it may change down the line. A. Reid asked what the penalty is for acting on removal before Borough approval? D'Angelo did not see any language pertaining to penalties in the existing Fair Haven Ordinance. Mayor Halpern discussed Borough Fees with the Municipal Clerk and concurs with a fee increase, as it would give pause to abundant tree removal and raise additional funds to rebuild the Borough's canopy. He also agrees a large fine would encourage builders to follow the timeline and approval process. D. Paolo thanked the Mayor for his support on this ordinance update

effort. M. D'Angelo read from the Fair Haven Tree Ordinance that "a Tree Escrow Fund shall be established and maintained by the Chief Financial Officer of Fair Haven Borough to receive and disburse replacement tree contributions. Appropriations from the Tree Fund shall be authorized by the Governing Body with consideration of the Shade Tree Commission recommendation in accordance with the municipal tree planting plan." D. Paolo asked where the Tree Removal fees go – the Borough General Ledger or STC Trust? C. McCabe asked if there are any mitigation clauses? M. D'Angelo said there are a lot of nuisances and is best to keep it open ended. D. Paolo stated "right tree, right time" should be the motto. M. D'Angelo encouraged all STC members to review both Rumson and Fair Haven Tree Ordinances.

k. Updates from Borough Tree Specialist, Bill Brooks

D. Paolo conveyed information from Bill Brooks: Spotted lantern flies still prevalent. Bacterial leaf scorch continues among Oak Trees which is transferred by insects from one tree to another. Fortunately, there is a promising treatment on the horizon. Hance Road Ash trees were removed by homeowners due to an infestation. The tree proximity to Knollwood School created a hazard situation if not removed promptly. At the Hance Road and Lewis Point Road intersection, there is a tree that has been identified as a hazard tree (hollow), will be removed. A. Reid suggested an educational social media post regarding the bacterial leaf scorch; she and D. Paolo will look for more information to post.

7. Public Participation (2 public attendees)

Bonnie Torcivia is thrilled the STC is reviewing the Tree Ordinance. She believes there should be higher rates for developers to remove trees i.e. \$10,000. She asked if STC was looking at other towns for best practices besides Rumson, i.e. Princeton? Who is in charge of positioning the orange fencing around trees during construction to protect them? M. D'Angelo referenced the Rumson tree ordinance: a yellow dot is marked on trees that will be taken down to identify them. L. Beganie recently went through this process when she took down her house and said the onus is on the homeowner to protect the trees on the property. Ms. Torcivia believes STC should have a role on public and private property. She also volunteered to work on the Tree Inventory project and thanked the commission members for all their work. C. McCabe suggested Ms. Torcivia take the Invasive Tree and Vines class under CEUs given her past interest in the path that connects Third Street and Fair Haven Fields. She said there is an organization in the state that addresses the invasive issue. She recommended doing the Tree Inventory in the spring when there are leaves on the trees (makes it easier). Regarding the extension of Kwanzan Cherry Trees on Fair Haven Road, she suggested a native tree would be better. D. Paolo responded that they are open to ideas.

8. Proposed New Agenda Items

- 2022 Big Tree Hunt: D. Paolo asked Commission members to keep this topic in mind for 2022.

9. Adjournment: L. Beganie made a motion to adjourn @ 8:46pm, A. Reid seconded. All in favor.