



Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 10, 2023
8:00 p.m.
[held remotely via Zoom]

1. Call to Order—Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 pm

2. Roll Call

Commission Members present:

Todd Bradbury
Scott Devlin, Councilman
Miriam Lockhart

George Paschalis, Secretary/Acting Chairman
Dan Serata
Tsun Tam

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Lockhart, seconded by Mr. Tam, to approve the June 12, 2023 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Open Meeting to Public Comment

Mr. Dan Forman, 118 Venus Drive, spoke regarding a tree that was planted in 2014 that is not, in his opinion, ideally situated. The Commission pledged to investigate the matter and follow up.

5. Correspondence

Mr. Paschalis reviewed incoming correspondence from Environmental Commission member Krishna Rege and Councilwoman Amitai regarding the Spotted Lanternfly. In his response to Councilwoman Amitai, Chairman Abate noted the existence of seventeen Tree-of-heaven street trees and recommended a joint meeting with all stakeholders, including the Shade Tree Commission and Environmental Commission, to formulate a Borough-wide response.

6. **Old Business**

a) Spotted Lanternfly

Commission members discussed the Mayor's recently issued Special Notice regarding the Spotted Lanternfly. Councilman Devlin reported that the Borough had applied for state funding to combat the spread of the pest. Mr. Bradbury noted the Environmental Commission was in the process of cataloguing the presence of Tree-of-heaven in the Borough's parks.

b) Trees for Schools grant program

Mr. Paschalis reported on his efforts, and those of Mr. Bradbury, to complete this grant application by the deadline of July 13. The grant submission will be made by the school district on the community's behalf. Unfortunately, the grant program will not cover costs associated with riverbank stabilization. Mr. Paschalis will prepare a letter of support on behalf of the Commission.

c) Completing Tree Inventory/Dead Tree Removals

Mr. Paschalis noted a number of potentially dead trees identified in the tree inventory (but not specifically categorized) need to be addressed.

d) Tree Removals

Mr. Bradbury recapped the interim approach of using a Google Docs spreadsheet to track removals, as well as his on-going efforts to harness the tracking features of the Tree Plotter software for any number of Commission activities.

e) Watering Bags

A motion was made by Councilman Devlin, seconded by Mr. Serata, to utilize funding from the tree maintenance line to procure the watering bags previously voted for at the June meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **New Business**

a) Approval to obtain proposals for fall tree planting (District 6)

A motion was made by Mr. Bradbury, seconded by Mr. Serata, to approve that the Borough request proposals for the fall tree planting in District 6, up to 50 trees, varieties to be determined. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Lockhart asked about the status of the Shade Tree Trust Fund. Mr. Paschalis noted that, while a report does not get distributed to the Commission on a monthly basis—as had been agreed to by the Borough on numerous occasions—it is provided to Councilman Devlin upon his request, whereupon he distributes it. It was agreed that Councilman Devlin would request this information via email a week before scheduled Commission meetings.

b) Approval to obtain proposals for fall pruning (District 1)

A motion was made by Councilman Devlin, seconded by Ms. Lockhart, to approve that the Borough request proposals for the fall pruning in District 1, including county roads and structural pruning of trees up to 8" caliper. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Approval to obtain proposals for tree removals

A motion was made by Councilman Devlin, seconded by Mr. Tam, to approve the Borough request proposals for tree removals. Proposals will include the current list of trees identified for removal as well as the 14 dead trees identified last November. The motion passed unanimously.

d) Enforcement of zones of protection (new construction)

Mr. Bradbury noted this enforcement is not happening consistently, despite several inter-borough meetings on the matter. Mr. Paschalis noted zones of protection for trees is codified in Borough ordinance and should not be treated as optional, by contractors or code enforcement officials. Mr. Devlin will communicate the Commission's concerns to Mr. Jezequel and Mr. Winters.

Ms. Lockhart also noted an instance where a tree was removed prior to a permit being issued along Piermont Avenue. Mr. Paschalis will investigate.

e) Recording/Plotting Completed Tree Plantings (new construction)

Mr. Bradbury noted progress with the TreePlotter software.

f) Mayor's Newsletter

Mr. Bradbury suggested the Commission revisit the issue of topping. Mr. Paschalis will draft the submission.

g) Adoption of Commission's Approved Tree List

Ms. Lockhart noted that the Building Department is still using an Approved Tree List inconsistent with the Commission's. Councilman Devlin suggested the Commission's List should be used by the Building Department and will revisit this issue with the Ordinance Committee and, ultimately, the Borough Council.

8. Reports

a) Shade Tree Budget Report—*received*

b) Shade Tree Trust Fund Report—*see 7a above*

c) Governing Body—Councilman Devlin noted the Northern Valley Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring an electric vehicle show at Closter Commons on July 17.

d) Environmental Commission— Councilman Devlin noted the Environmental Commission did not meet this past month.

9. Inspections/Plan Reviews

Members discussed various reviews.

10. Meeting Adjournment (approximately 9:05 p.m.)