



## **Meeting Minutes**

Monday, November 13, 2023

8:00 p.m.

*[held remotely via Zoom]*

**1. Call to Order—Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 pm

**2. Roll Call**

*Commission Members present:*

Nils Abate, Chairman  
Todd Bradbury  
Miriam Lockhart

George Paschalis, Secretary  
Dan Serata  
Tsun Tam

**3. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Lockhart, seconded by Mr. Tam, to approve the October 9, 2023 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Open Meeting to Public Comment**

**5. Correspondence**

Mr. Paschalis highlighted the various communications received by the Commission, including from Administrator Winters, Dan Forman, and the submissions from 2023 Fall Foliage Photo Contest. Mr. Paschalis further reported on the preliminary and pro bono landscape plan prepared by Closter resident and landscape architect Eric Mattes which will be used to elicit stakeholder input in advance of the submission to the grantor.

**6. Old Business**

a) Request for permission to remove shade tree at 95 Forest Street  
Members discussed the homeowner's request to remove the shade tree. The following motion—made by Mr. Paschalis, and seconded by Ms. Lockhart—passed unanimously:

*Given the tree in question is in relatively good health and is showing no signs of distress, and given the Commission must focus its limited resources on trees that pose a clear and present danger to the community, the Commission declines at this time to remove this tree.*

*At the same time, members respect the homeowners' feelings on this matter and will consider granting permission to the homeowners to remove the tree at their own expense, should they so desire, with the understanding that a new tree of a large variety would be subsequently planted for future generations.*

b) Approving updated "Do Not Prune" letter

Members reviewed and edited an updated version of the Commission's "Do Not Prune" letter. A motion was made by Ms. Lockhart, seconded by Mr. Tam, to approve the letter template as amended (final copy is attached to the minutes) and to authorize the Secretary to adjust the wording as circumstances dictate. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Moved street tree: 86 Wainwright Avenue

Mr. Paschalis recapped efforts to engage Code Enforcement on this unauthorized tree relocation. Chairman Abate committed to engage the Building Department on this matter.

d) Finalizing draft RFP: Community Forestry Management Plan Update

Chairman Abate suggested, and members agreed, that the Commission budget five thousand for this state-mandated Plan Update. Mr. Paschalis reminded members that the RFP edits still need to be compiled.

Mr. Bradbury made motion, seconded by Mr. Paschalis, to move forward with preparing the RFP for review and a vote at next month's meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. New Business**

a) 2023 Fall Foliage Photo Contest

Mr. Paschalis reviewed the submissions received, and members selected Monica Souza as a winner.

b) 2024 Meeting Dates

Mr. Paschalis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lockhart, to continue public meetings in 2024 via zoom and to change the start time to 7:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Budget Adjustments

Members discussed how to spend the remaining monies in the budget, including additional pruning or planting. Members discussed and agreed to required increases to the upcoming budget, including renewing the subscription to Tree Plotter (\$3,000—to be confirmed) and the Plan Update (\$5,000). Chairman Abate will email the proposed budget prior to submission to the Borough. Mr. Paschalis will prepare a one-page narrative that provides additional context to the proposed budget.

d) 2023 Tree Planting

Mr. Bradbury reported out on progress identifying this year's sites, and noted the contractor will have completed the plantings by the second week in December.

e) Updating Approved Tree List

Mr. Paschalis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lockhart, to approve the Updated Approved Tree List and send same to the Borough for posting on the website in keeping with the recently passed amendment to Chapter 181

f) Certificates of Appreciation

Mr. Paschalis will prepare certificates for the next meeting.

g) Mayor's Newsletter

Mr. Paschalis will share the results of the Fall Foliage Photo Contest.

h) New member drive

Members discussed the need to fill the vacancies on the Commission.

i) Public Library Oak

Mr. Bradbury noted the Public Library will be losing the oak tree in the front yard. Mr. Serata made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradbury, to recommend use of the Shade Tree Trust Fund to replace the oak tree. The motion passed unanimously.

**8. Reports**

a) Shade Tree Budget Report—*provided by Borough Hall*

b) Shade Tree Trust Fund Report—*not provided by Borough Hall*

c) Governing Body

**9. Plan Reviews/Inspections**

**10. Meeting Adjournment** (approximately 9:30 p.m.)