

February 8, 2024

The Meeting of the Middlesex Shade Tree Commission was held on the above date at the Middlesex Borough Hall and called to order by Chairman Jason Bond with the following comments:

“This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law in that the requirements of the law have been met by the Annual Meeting Notice which has been forwarded to the Courier News and posted in the Municipal Building on January 2, 2024”

Members: Jason Bond
 Sean Johnson
 Jim Gorman (absent)
 Frank Ryan
 Jeff Killian

Council Liaison: Martin Quinn (absent)

Secretary Linda Chismar

Chairman Jason Bond opened the meeting to the public.

Angel Flores, 209 Walnut Street attended the meeting, requested an update on the tree in front of his property that he felt damaged his roof and elevated his sidewalk.

The Commission indicated that they looked at his tree and felt that it was a good, healthy tree and could not justify removal. They indicated that he may want to call his homeowner’s company and see what they recommend for the uplifting sidewalk

Mr. Flores was not happy with the results of the commission, brought pictures to the meeting of the sidewalk, but not evidence that the tree branch had damaged the roof that he mentioned. The sidewalk appeared to be slightly elevated.

The Commission discussed different methods of handling the uplifting sidewalk, which is the homeowner’s responsibility, and Mr. Johnson was going to discuss with the DPW Superintendent if a shade tree slightly uplifted a sidewalk, if the DPW could put a small asphalt patch to the sidewalk. Mr. Johnson will report back to the Commission about this option.

Chairman Bond will email or call Mr. Flores to discuss this potential resolution to this matter.

Seeing that there was no further public participation, Chairman Bond closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the January 11, 2024 Shade Tree Meeting Minutes seconded by Mr. Killian and carried by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Chairman Bond, along with all the members present reviewed the January, 2023 Finance Report.

Communications

1. 926 Voorhees Avenue – Mr. Johnson will assess the tree at this property that resident feels is dead.
2. 214 Appian way – Mr. Bond will assess the tree at this property that has branches intertwined in the wires.
3. 353 Drake Avenue – Mr. Johnson will check on the tree that is dropping branches.

Work Agenda

1. 200 Blackford Avenue– Commission agreed to remove the 2 dead trees that are marked and prune approximately 14 trees around the dead trees.
2. Tree on corner of Oak and Ashland – Mr. Bond recommended that the pin oak be put on follow up until the Spring.

Violations

1. 510 Beechwood Avenue – Court date for violation – This court date has been rescheduled to determine the violation.

Unfinished Business

- A. JLUB Application – 156 Baekeland Ave. LLC (Block 341, Lot 1.01) – Chairman Bond Reported the following on this application should be addressed:

1- root collars of shade and evergreen trees shall be exposed and free from visible defects at time of planting.

1(a)- if landscape installer is unable to correctly address any root collar issues then a NJ licensed tree care expert is required to perform the work prior to acceptance of planting.

2- Increase the amount of shade and evergreen trees by 50%, shrubs, perennials and grasses by 25%

Note: if developer doubles the amount of proposed shade and evergreen trees, then the size requirement of the installed tree can be smaller in caliper/diameter and height but no smaller than 1.5" but in equal health and aesthetics as proposed.

3- a blend of Quercus species, at the proposed planting ratio, is preferred due to the potential of bacterial leaf scorch in our region.

Their site plans indicates they have taken soil sample or samples for the planting sites. Copies shall be provided to the Shade Tree Commission.

- B. JLUB Application - B & B 18 LLC Lincoln Boulevard – Vice Chairman Johnson reported the following on this application should be addressed:

1. Minimum planting width should be 2 times the size of the root ball and not 1 1/2.

2. Increase deciduous and evergreen planting by 25% if possible
3. All plantings must have root collar excavation at time of planting to expose the root collar.
4. Mulch shall not exceed 2"

C. 510 Beechwood Avenue – See Above.

New Business

- A. Budget Update – Commission agreed to have all outstanding tree work encumbered by the secretary.
- B. NJUC Community Forestry Program Annual Accomplishment Report – This report was completed and secretary will submit.
- C. Spring Planting Update – The commission is in the process of determining more locations to plant trees in the Spring.
- D. Tree Inventory – Chairman will discuss with the Purchasing Agent the bid packet to move forward with the tree inventory.
- E. Sidewalk discussion – Commission discussed the handling of elevated sidewalks and Vice Chairman Johnson will discuss with the DPW Superintendent options that we could utilize the DPW to do minor repairs. This will also need attorney involvement. The Commission will follow up on this discussion at the next meeting.

Jim Gorman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sean Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Linda Chismar, Secretary

NEXT SHADE TREE COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY,
MARCH 14, 2024 – 7 PM

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please call Linda at 732-356-7400, Ext. 238