

October 14, 2021
Remote Meeting

The meeting of the Middlesex Shade Tree Commission was held remotely on the above date and called to order by Chairman Jason Bond.

“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 Meeting Notice which has been forwarded to the Courier News and posted in the Municipal Building on December 8, 2020 and amended on September 10, 2021.

Members: Jason Bond
 Sean Johnson
 Jim Gorman
 Jeff Killian
 Frank Ryan
 Martin Quinn, Council Representative

Secretary Linda Chismar

Chairman Bond opened the meeting to the public.

Thomas Hand, 282 Harris Avenue attended the meeting and discussed the trees on his property that are unsafe and leaning into his house. Tree 1 on the side of property had work done by PSE&G which removed branches and made a huge wishbone, which he is concerned is dangerous. Tree 2 on the side property has a large branch that can do damage, and Tree 3 which is on the side of the driveway and is an evergreen which leans towards the house.

Chairman Bond looked at the evergreen, which is not a borough tree and stated Mr. Hand can remove if he chooses. He also looked at the 2 maples in the front left of the house. Upon inspection of the 2 maples, he feels that these trees need to be pruned of dead branches and we will address the low limbs. Also, Chairman Bond reported that the tree limbs will be cleared of wires.

Seeing that there were no further public comments, Chairman Bond closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mr. Bond moved to approve the September 9, 2021 Shade Tree Meeting Minutes seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Mr. Bond moved to approve the September, 2021 Finance Report seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Communications

1. 34 C Street – Mr. Bond looked at this red oak and reported that it should be pruned.

2. 282 Harris Avenue – Resident attended public portion above.
3. 537 Giles Avenue – Mr. Bond reported that this red maple tree needed a limb reduction towards the house and clean the stubs.
4. 421 North Lincoln – Mr. Bond reported that this Norway Maple had a cracked limb towards the garage and reported that the lead towards the garage should be removed and the tree should have a 2” prune.
5. 131 Smalley Avenue – Mr. Bond reported that Predator should check the pin oak for anything that is questionable and if all is good then 2” prune. If there is any suspect limbs then he should prune them back to minimize the risk. The ash that is on the same block is to be pruned.

Work Agenda

1. 112 Stephenson Avenue – Mr. Johnson reported that the red maple closest to driveway needs a 1” crown clean and 3 steel cables with eye bolts installed, and the other maple needs to be crown cleaned and elevated over driveway.
2. 524 Melrose Avenue – Mr. Bond reported that the tree needs to be removed.
3. 146 Coleman Avenue – Mr. Killian reported that tree was ok and no signs of ants.
4. 87 Conover Street – Commission reported that the DPW needs to mark these trees so that they can be assessed.
5. 417 Chestnut Street – This tree was removed by homeowner, but it had been reported by Mr. Johnson to be dead.
6. 303 Fairview Avenue (Delaware Ave. side) – Commission will follow up with Mr. Gorman who was assigned to inspect the tree that resident feels is infested and a hole is located on the bottom of the tree.
7. 501 Decatur Avenue – Mr. Bond will look at this tree that has symptoms of bacterial leaf scorch and seems to be failing.
8. 126 Fifth Street – Mr. Bond reported that the large oak on the right should be removed and grounding of stump is not needed. The oak in front of property should be pruned.
9. 101 Grandview Avenue – Mr. Bond reported that the tree should be pruned.
10. 300 Grant Avenue – Mr. Johnson reported that the catalpa tree should be removed and the London plane growing into the blue spruce should be pruned.
11. 124 Prospect Place – The Ash tree on the right of property should be removed and Mr. Bond will look at the large ash across from this property.

12. 121 Chestnut Street – Mr. Johnson reported that the Linden Tree should be elevated over the sidewalk and roadway and pruned away from the power wires.
13. 706 Cook Avenue – Mr. Bond tagged the dead tree and further back in the area there is another dead tree. For the second tree, the brush can stay there once removed.
14. Between 116 Valley Brook Court and 125 Valley Brook Court – tree at the end of First Street needs to be pruned.
15. 280 Lincoln Boulevard – Mr. Killian reported that the tree leaning on the building should have the branches leaning into the building cut and also branches over Lincoln Boulevard cut.
16. 339 Lorraine Avenue – Mr. Bond reported that this silver oak should be removed and replaced with a Zelcova.
17. 5 Shearn Drive – Mr. Bond reported that he did not see a hole in the tree, but reported that it should be pruned.
18. 314 Second Street – The Commission is requesting that the DPW prune the low branches on the 4 sycamore trees in front of this property.
19. 315 First Street – Mr. Gorman will check the tree in front of this property to see if it needs to be removed for the paving of the driveway.
20. 328 Howard Avenue – Mr. Bond will check the large tree in front of this property that has dead branches and resident is afraid it is going to fall.
21. 316 Raphael Avenue – Mr. Bond will go out to look at the tree that resident is requesting be trimmed.

Unfinished Business

1. RFP for Tree Inventory – Mr. Johnson will have an update at the November 18, 2021 Commission Meeting.
2. 106 Cap Lane – Mr. Bond reported that 30% of the tree canopy had bacterial leaf scorch, so this tree will be put on the list for removal

New Business

1. The 96th Annual Shade Tree Federation Conference – Crown Plaza, Cherry Hill (October 21 & 22) – Mr. Bond & Mr. Gorman will attend.
2. Appointment of Vice Chairman – A motion was made by Mr. Bond to appoint Sean Johnson as Vice Chairman of the Commission, seconded by Mr. Ryan and carried by a unanimous vote of Council.
3. Tree Management Plan Renewal – Mr. Bond will look into this matter and discuss with Mr. Cowey at the Conference.

4. Potential Ordinance Amendment – Commission discussed a potential Ordinance Amendment regarding having residents request Shade Tree approval to remove shade trees and allow them to pay for the removal. Mr. Bond discussed this matter with the Freehold forester, but he suggested that the borough must cover themselves for any liability that occurs to borough property when they remove a tree on the right of way. The commission suggested a possible rider put in the permit or checking with Freehold about what they use. This matter was tabled as there was a lot of information that must be obtained to move forward.
5. Documentation Needed for Potential Violations – Mr. Bond reviewed all the documentation that will be needed and process that will be followed to have a violation issued for an illegal tree removal. The steps include calling the secretary, document w/pictures, have DPW measure the location of the removal and have the Code Enforcer/Zoning Enforcer investigation in order to issue the violation.
6. Shade Tree Donation of a tree in memory of “John Sweeney” – Commission discussed the donation in memory of John Sweeney, who will be remembered as a “true gentleman” and dedicated “public servant” for the borough. They will be looking for a potential flowering tree that they agreed to donate – possibly a native tree. They will also look to stake a location for the planting of this tree.
7. Commission requested that they be informed of any updates that PSE&G is doing tree work in the borough.
8. Tree Planting – Commission will review listing of potential fall planting and advise Secretary of the locations, so that we can move forward and encumber the funds from the Tree Replacement Fund.
9. Mr. Bond made a suggestion that the borough obtain free saplings and look to plant them in the open area that was previously used for planting on Raritan Avenue. They would like to plant 2 – 3 saplings around the existing ones, in order to triple the quantity of plants. Mr. Bond is also recommending that we purchase long-term fencing and have the DPW provide wood chips, so that we could possibly dedicate this as a tree arboretum, so that the land can be protected. They also requested Councilman Quinn look into a letter that would be needed to request Council’s permission to dedicate this land.
10. Commission discussed the November 18, 2021 Meeting and agreed to hold the meeting in the Recreation Center, rather than remote.

Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bond and carried by a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Linda Chismar, Secretary

NEXT SHADE TREE COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY,

November 18, 2021 – 7:30 PM
RECREATION CENTER

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