

Leonia Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes December 8, 2021

Present: Christine Healy, Imanta Bergmanis, Vivian DeMarco, Mark Spiegel, Soo Joung Woo, Kathi Verbeek, Laura-Lindsay Sewell and Bill Ziegler (Counsel Liaison), and John Villareal and Charles Moren (DPW). Absent: Julie Ulbrich

Approval of minutes November 9, 2021 - approved with 2 changes regarding spelling.

The meeting is in compliance with the Open Meeting Act as the date, time, and place of all regular meetings were filed with the Borough Clerk and have been properly publicized.

Public Portion: None

Council Liaison Report: Bill Zeigler reported on key matters affecting the borough being addressed by the Mayor & Counsel.

STC specific topic is regarding involving the STC members for planting related to the new police/town building on Fort Lee Road for recommendations for tree planting with regards to the plan.

Chairperson report

Volunteer hours noted for end of the year annual application for Tree City USA.

Commissioners' Reports

481 Park evaluation request discussed.

2022 Budget – Imanta noted that the 2022 Operating Budget is due to the BA by December 14, 2021.

Discussion on Pollarding vs. Topping – This issue was raised in regards to tree work on Fort Lee Rd with regards to 3 Elm trees. Significant amounts of all three canopies were removed. Chuck reports that this type of cutting will cause these types of trees rapid decline. We discussed a need for Industry Standards regarding pruning, and possible addition of language to the ST ordinance for protection of mature trees and pruning standard. Chuck/John volunteered to evaluate ordinances from other towns (Paramus and River Edge noted) to look for standards for protection.

Grand Avenue Evaluation Project for tree/stump removal to communicate to the State of NJ – Christine is planning to divide Grand Ave amongst commissioners so that each may evaluate the trees for pruning/removal/stump removal, and send a master list to the attention of the State.

Private Property Planting Program – Spring 2022 sites

Vivian reported that she discussed private tree planting with the following:

102 Glenwood Ave – will accept 1 tree, further discussion re:type

226 Glenwood Ave – declines a tree

336 Magnolia Ave – will accept 1 tree – to discuss type further

317 Elm – approached via letter, pending response
320 Elm – approached via letter, pending response

Media and Marketing

Postcards - Kathi and Soo updated on status. Worked with Sean at the Rec Center for planning and guidance on posting. #3800 postcard printed. Cost approximately \$400 to print and approximately \$1100 to post.

Website to inform residents of STC work– discussion was had over the possibility of posting updates to the website to let residents know about the everyday work re: STC in town – i.e. Spring/Fall planting, private property planting, postcards, Landmark Tree.

Advertise ‘open’ Leonia Commissions positions on the Boro website.

Discussion on residents who indicate they do not want a tree planted on borough right-of-way

During Fall planting 5-7 separate residents declined trees in the Boro right-of-way. The ability of the STC to plant in these places remains a Boro decision, but we agreed that we are working for partnership with homeowners. It was recommended that we amend with wording of the letter to note planting will occur for the greater good of the Boro canopy.

Discussion on removal of trees in connection with new sidewalk/curb project on Broad between Summit and Highwood

During this project the DPW was approached by the town Engineer to evaluate d trees. Trees were then evaluated and marked by DPW for potential removal due to the scope of this project and sidewalks that were to be replaced as well as corner ADA curbs. At this time 4 trees were marked. DPW on 12/3/21 reached out us to further evaluate the trees for removal. Christine walked the area on 12/4 to evaluate the trees and agreed that there were probably 5 trees that should be removed due to spacing, safety and health of the trees. Residents from town requested information regarding these decisions and the timing of the STC interaction. After this there was a meeting with the Boro Administrator, DPW, and the STC commissioners. We all decided that the STC would again review the work space and agree to tree removals. Also it was recommended that the STC be involved in any public works improvements of this scale at the beginning of the planning for these types of public improvement projects as noted by the Boro Administrator and the Boro Engineer. Imanta/Christine plan to walk the project in the next 2-3 days and will coordinate with the Boro Tree Expert/Charles.

Memorial Plantings – new and maintenance

Imanta and Christine discussed Memorial planting, maintenance and plaques with Sean Krakower/Rec Center and he agreed with these types of planting and plans. Further discussion to be had re:maintenance.

Leonia Arbor Day proclamation for 2021 – Christine to draft and submit to the M&C for approval.

Downtown Leonia – Tree Planting Project - No new information to report.

Revisions to Chapter 275-16 Landmark Trees – Discussion was had with the Boro Attorney regarding changes to the language and recommendations. Imanta is working on continue revisions to this portion of the Ordinance.

Discussion on public notification and opportunity for residents to provide their input about the removal of a mature street tree – Further discussion regarding the recommendation of removal of the Oak at 496 Park and the Klegs' request were had. The STC agreed to perform due diligence to note street tree addresses where trees are undergoing evaluation for removal on the monthly STC Agendas which are posted to the STC page of the town website prior to our meetings. This will allow for public input during these meetings.

CEUs –Laura-Lindsay and Charles earned CEUs over the course of 2021 and have acquired >10 CEUs between 2 STC/DPW members. This helps to qualify Leonia as a Tree City USA applicant for the year.

New/Old Business

Posting open positions for Committees in town on the Leonia website banner – Kathi proposed advertising all the Boro's open positions on the front page banner in Leonia to improve awareness and applications. Bill will speak to Andrea about this possibility. Currently the STC has 1 unfilled position.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Healy-Sammis