

Leonia Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2022

Present: Christine Healy-Sammis, Kathi Verbeek, Mark Spiegel, Bill Ziegler (Council Liaison), Vivian DeMarco, Soo Joung Woo, Laura Lindsey Sewell, John Villareal & Charles Moren (DPW)

Absent: Imanta Bergmanis, Julie Ulbrich

Statement of Compliance with Sunshine Law

Public Portion: Open to comments questions from Leonia residents (none present)

Minutes of August 10, 2022 were not approved (not completed) – will be approved in October.

Council Liaison Report: Bill Ziegler reported the following –

- 2 new patrol officers were hired – LPD is almost at full staffing
- Problem with foundation pour of new police station due to rain per consultant. Despite rain, contractor decided to proceed. At contractor' expense, compromised footings removed and new footings poured. Should only delay construction timeline by 1 week.
- Masonry planters along Broad Avenue & Ft. Lee Road were installed by the Leonia Board of Education with no coordination with Andrea (Boro Administrator) or John Villereal (DPW). Planters are collecting garbage and stagnant water, and cars along Broad Ave are hitting them. Question is who will plant and maintain them?? Consensus that it should NOT be Boro or Shade Tree Commission. DPW is already over-extended.

Chairperson Report:

SLF – information out to Leonians to contact DPW for reporting of infestation on private property.

Improvement of Tree Removal Permitting – 1. Require tree service to obtain the permit. 2. Change the ordinance to make both tree service/homeowner responsible. 3. As already in Building Department work order, complete and issue a permit that is neon green to be distributed in Tree Service truck and homeowner's window describing such to make is easy for enforcement to see.

Commissioner's Report:

- 95 Glenwood Avenue removed a dead tree without a permit. Despite public notices, there does not appear to be a clear process being followed. Mailers to residents have been sent in Tax Bills, and requirements are on-line. To date, not fines have appear to have been levied per Ordinance guidelines.

- Who is responsible – Homeowner or tree cutter? Ultimately, it is the homeowner’s responsibility. Either homeowner or contractor can pull permit
- Boro Administrator MUST have a list of work approved with permit, and permit must be posted on house.
- Licensed “Tree Expert” vs “Tree Operator is an ongoing issue. How to resolve?
- If no permit pulled or displayed/posted, homeowner should be issue a “letter or warning.”
- Leonia Building Dept. & Property Maintenance should coordinate with the Police Department.
- Per Bill Ziegler, Shade Tree Commission should be looped into the Property Maintenance & Building Dept. regarding coordination. Who would be willing to do this? Will likely have only several meetings per year. Mark said he may be able to do this.
- Mark asked in case of hazardous tree on private property what does one do? Must notify homeowner to establish communication so that there is a record. If homeowner doesn’t respond, per DPW, might require an order by a judge to compel. There is language in the Ordinance
- **Evaluations** – Laura-Lindsey and Imanta did a walkabout, but no evaluations.

Spotted Lantern Fly:

- Kathy & Soo are providing a flyer to be included in the September Tax Filing in both English & Korean. Life-cycle & description of spotted lantern fly & tree of heaven which is their primary habitat.
- If infestation is witnessed, should notify State and DPW.
- Due to timing of tax filing, could not provide more detailed information. Will instead be included on Shade Tree Commission website.
- Kathy & Soo are working with Mike Greco to update Boro website – more user friendly and links. Reformatting by major categories (ie Private vs Boro trees) and Important Alerts such as the spotted lantern fly & tree of heaven. Mike has been very responsive.
- Link to Eagle Scout website – Leonia Tree Tour.
- 3rd Grade STEM project on spotted lantern fly & tree of heaven. Zoom meeting on September 22 at 3:30 PM.
- Per Charles Moran, trees infested with spotted lantern fly have been found in Wood Park mixed in with bamboo. Located on North side along fence facing Woodridge Place.
- How to deal with spotted lantern fly – root treatment or trunk injection. How to kill flies chemicals or traps? Difficult solution as there are thousands of flies on tree of heaven plants and hundreds on Maple trees.
- Per Charles, Praying Mantis are natural predators, but not sufficient with infestation.

Licensed Tree Expert Requirement:

- LTE waivers. JP Lee of Building Department to coordinate permitting process.
- To make sure that all required licenses are up to date.
- Check list of tree companies – are they “Experts” or “Operators.”

Fall Plantings:

- Specifications for trees and plantings have been sent out to providers
- Have list of locations & types of trees to be planted.
- Private Planting locations are still needed.
- Mark asked to make sure that Sandy Pancrazi at 123 Woodridge was on the list for a Sugar Maple (it is on list).

Walk About for District 5 for 2022:

- Mark requested that he be sent the list for the last walk about with addresses & trees at locations.
- Vivian DeMarco identified approximately 60 trees which were in mostly good condition. There was 1 dead tree on North Side of Overlook near Broad Avenue.
- Large tree on Hillcrest between Vreeland & Van Orden. Trunk takes up most of sidewalk. Inspection needed to determine best solution. Mature tree is in good condition, but may require sidewalk adjustment to make safer for pedestrians.

2023 Capital Budget:

- Per Bill Ziegler, Capital Budget for Shade Tree Commission in 2023 was approved as presented/requested, but not yet finalized by Mayor & Council.

Town Calendar:

- Has been mailed to Leonia homeowners
- Includes Private Planting & Permitting Process

CEU's:

- CEU's are still needed. Check NJ Shade Tree Federation Convention.
- Rutgers Extension – has ZOOM programs.
- PSE&G – on Sept. 22 & 29th, has a free virtual program.
- Need 2 people
- NJ Dept of Environmental Protection – see email from 9/14/22
- NJ Tree Federation – see email from 9/14/22
- Cherry Hill Conference – 3 CEU credits

OLD Business:

- Tree removals – DPW has removed 4-5 Ash Trees in the old Gold Course area and has 4-5 remaining to take down (approximately 8 total)

- Must remove a Birch Tree on Glenwood Avenue
- Ordinance – must change language in ordinance regarding pruning vs pollarding. To use “best practices” approach.
- John Villereal to review what other New Jersey towns are doing – language in ordinances and fines.

Minutes by Mark Spiegel