

Leonia Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2023

Present: Imanta Bergmanis, Bill Ziegler (Council Liaison), Christine Healy, John Villareal & Charles Moran (DPW), Mark Spiegel. Laura Lindsey Sewell

Absent: Soo Joung Woo, Julie Ulbrich, Kathi Verbeek, Vivian DeMarco

Reappointment: Imanta Bergmanis was reappointed to the Shade Tree Commission in Jan 2023

December 2022 minutes were approved

The meeting was noted to be in compliance with the Open Meeting Act as of the date, time, and Place of all regular meetings were filed with the Borough Clerk and had been properly publicized.

Public Portion: No public in attendance.

Council Liaison Report: Bill Ziegler

1. New recommendations from STC to M&C regarding Tree Ordinance. Recommendations were made to include fines to contractors removing trees if NO permits have been obtained for work on tree removal. Contractors will be required to obtain permits prior to doing tree removal and posting of this permit will be required.
2. Municipal building update – walls are going up and building is underway.
3. There is an increase in State Fees to the Boro of Leonia.

Chairperson Report:

STC Chair positions for 2023:

- Co-chairs: Imanta Bergmanis and Christine Healy-Sammis/Laura-Lindsay Sewell (TBD)
- Secretary: Shared responsibility with each member being assigned a meeting where he or she will take minutes of the meeting
- Marketing Chairs: Kathi Verbeek and Soo Joung Woo
- Fall/Spring Planting Chairs: Imanta Bergmanis and Christine Healy-Sammis
- Walk About Chair: Laura-Lindsay Sewell/Christine Healy-Sammis (TBD)
- Chair of Planning Board Project: Mark Spiegel
- Private Property Planting Co-Chairs: Julie Ulbrich and Vivian DeMarco

Tree removal permits: There have been several instances where neighboring homeowners/residents have called the Boro or the STC to report trees being removed at different addresses in town. In discussion with the Building department and the BA, we have discussed that going forward that Tree Removal Permits should be printed in green and displayed in the front windows of homes. We discussed the possibility that tree removal companies should also display the same in the truck window.

Downtown revitalization:

Discussion was had that budget has been allocated to improve the trees and tree wells in the downtown area. Changes have been put on hold until further M&C input with need for new spearhead to the project after councilwoman Flaim has completed her term on council.

Grand Ave Tree and stump maintenance needs:

John Villareal of the DPW reached out to the State regarding the poor state of several trees on Grand Ave. The person contacted at the state was told about the dangerous state of the trees and need for removal but declined sending an email to the Leonia Boro that these trees were not hazardous. Further follow up with the State is needed regarding the need to prune and/or remove several trees on State Road Grand Avenue in Leonia, NJ.

Spring planting for 2023 in Leonia

It was discussed that Private Property Planting for Spring 2023 should be a lottery due to demand for these planting on homeowner's properties.

Goal for Spring planting is for 20-30 trees with >15% planted as Privated Property. All STC were asked to provide 2-3 possible planting sites.

Private Propert Plantings:

With each of the past 4 planting, PPP have occurred.

It was recommended that each commissioner attempt to evaluated 2-3 site for potential Private Planting for Spring 2023.

Leonia STC website contains information regarding Leonia's Private Property Planting program.

Media/Marketing: Soo/Kathi

Many updates have been made in coordination with Kathi and Soo and Michael Greco in the Boro to improve the information for homeowners/residents regarding the Tree Ordinance and PPP information.

Memorial/Acheivement plantings in Wood Park:

A plaque is still needed for the Bald Cypress planted for Jane Wilson's years of service in Weood Park.

STC/Tree City USA, Growth Award, and NJUCF AAR (Annual Achievement Report) –

All 3 of the afore mentioned reports are due to the NJUCF and the Arbor Day Foundation by 2/15/2023 for submission for Leonia's 34th Tree City USA and for the 7th possible Growth Award. To keep in compliance with the Forestry Management Plan for Leonia which is renewed every 5 years, an Annual Achivement Report is also due prior to 2/15/2023 to the State Forestry program in NJ.

Information/statistics are needed from the DPW regarding hours spent on leaf removal, Christmas tree removal, and tree maintenance/removal/stump grinding, etc. Christine Healy-Sammis with reach out to John Villareal for the particulars needed to complete these applications.

STC Commissioner member position remains open.

Please have interested Leonians apply via the Leonianj.gov website application if interested.

Broad Ave Area #10/11 – Broad Ave from Highwood to Oakdene

STC has been made aware that this area contract has already been awarded to a contractor. This will not be the same contractor as in area #9.

We were made aware that there would be a pre-planning meeting prior to the work planned for Spring 2023. No meeting has occurred to date per Town Engineer and BA.

2023 Meeting Dates:

Meeting dates for 2023 were discussed. Typically meeting for the STC have been on the 2nd Wednesday of every month for the past 2-3 years. Prior to that, meetings were not held in the months of July and August. Meeting for 2023 were recommended and voted on to occur virtually on a monthly basis on every 2nd Wednesday, EXCEPT for the month of July due to inability to obtain a quorum.

Commissioners reports:

248 Glenwood – tree eval needed. Christine to evaluate and discuss with Charles Moren.

New/Old business:

John Vilareal obtained 8 evergreen trees from the county to be planted in Leonia after the county holiday festival. We will look for planting sites in the Boro and Parks in the next 1 month in order to plant these trees.

203 Cumley – it was reported that at 203 Cumley there was tree work done and that possibly a tree is missing without a work permit on Private Property.

209 Oratam -it was reported that a recently planted London Plane tree, planted by the Boro on Private Property was topped. Further investigation is needed.

Meeting adjourned 8:51p

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Healy-Sammis