

Leonia Shade Tree Commission Monthly Meeting Minutes for May 10th, 2023

Present: Imarnta Bergmanis, Bill Ziegler (Council Liaison), John Villareal (DPW), Vivian Demarco, Mark Spiegel, Kathy Verbeek, Julie Ulbrich, Soo Joung Woo

Absent: Christine Healy-Sammis, Laura Lindsey Sewell

Statement of Compliance with Sunshine Law

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

Minutes of March 8, 2023 was approved

Council Liaison Report : Bill Ziegler

- New Ordinance for using gas powered leaf blowers will be limited including DPW

Gas powered leaf blowers will be allowed only during these periods: 3/15-5/15 & 10/15-12/15 and electric leaf blowers or rakes must be used except the emergencies in town.

-Landscape Companies: Weekday 8am-6pm, Saturday 9am-2pm, No Sunday

-Home Owners: Weekday 8am-8pm, Saturday 9am-6pm, Sunday 10am-6pm

Comment by Mark – The electric powered leaf blowers actually are worse because they are much higher decibel level.

- 2023 Capital Budget

We're dealing with incredibly tight budgets and this year, you're going to see a substantial increase in your taxes.

We have three other things that are enormous expenses that we didn't have to deal with this year. The first is that we're going to begin to pay down the principal and interest on new municipal center. The second is that the county has

mandated requiring Leonia to do a revaluation. Every single one of our houses has to be reassessed and that typically means that you get a communication from an outside group they may request to come inside typically they do an inspection and they revalue the house based on current market circumstances. The cost of hiring that firm to do this work, which occurs basically every 10 years, is about 250,000 dollars.

Chairperson report

*40 Linden Terrace -A resident sent an email stating that a Tree root was uprooted to sidewalk-Kathi will inspect on this Friday then she will reach out Imanta & Christine

Commissioners' Reports

□ Leonia Day 5/21/23 Sunday (12-4pm)– Table will be set up and sign-up sheet will be sent out via email, Flyer about SLF, Give outs and PPP signup sheet

□ Walk About for District 6 for 2023 – Imanta will circulate an email – let people pick their streets

- A list will be given to John for removing & pruning trees (Imanta will let Andrea know the list too)

-All data taken by all commissioners will be added in the Excel spreadsheet or Google doc.

□ Spring 2023 Planting Scheduled for week of May 22, 2023 (35 trees including PPP)

-Imanta will reach out chief Police in order to mark off some spots for trees planting on Grand Ave. that say no parking.

-Imanta will give the list of addresses to John for watering the trees.

-Please keep looking for the locations during walkabout so that we can get the list of spots for September and October.

- Bill : if we have this new internship program that was funded by the state or the federal government and there were four students who've been identified to work the, the list of projects is being formulated maybe we ask one of them to take this on and maybe we might have other projects as well.

-we should reach out Garden Apartments on Grand Ave. for PPP

□ Spotted Lantern Fly – No report

□ Media and Marketing

-Nixle, Tax notice message & website update: to remind people we had the new ordinance and what their responsibilities are and if they have a green permit then they should post it.

-The message can include that if people have questions whether or not a permit's been obtained they can call the building department & it's outside of normal business hours that are called the non emergency number of the police department if a tree is being removed, and they're concerned to permit was issued or not.

- It still is the homeowner who would get the fine we're not allowed to fine the tree service companies.

-Soo will translate these messages into Korean

- Kathi's Suggestion; having the interns go and doing like, a quick little video or something that could be shared with the town like, if there's a medium that we could share with so that we could celebrate tree plantings that make it a little bit more exciting.

If the interns are fun people to be around, I think it would be fun for them to help inform the town residents about new things going on, like the municipal building going up, or some of the sculpture of Leonia, or the yoga classes that are going on

in town, especially to help people realize the charms of the Leonia neighborhood before they get their tax bills.

□ New/Old Business

Mark- I do have a friend who wanted some flowering trees on their median in front of their house on Highwood Avenue. Due to wire on the above it has to be small trees (recommend cherry tree, red bud, hawthorn not dogwood) it's on the borough property.

Vivian- asked for sidewalk ordinance because town tree uprooted the sidewalk. 324 Magnolia place

Bill answered that current sidewalk ordinance states that the home owners are responsible for the dangerous sidewalk.

Transcribed by Soo Woo