

**City of Plainfield
Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of Meeting of November 19, 2014
Planning Conference Room, City Hall
515 Watching Avenue
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060**

1. Roll Call and Call to Order: Chair Peter Simone called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. Present were Mr. Simone, Tim Kirby, Mary Burgwinkle, David Frost, Jan Massey and Barbara Spellmeyer from the Commission. Oscar Riba was excused. Also present: April Stefel (Planning Division).

2. Open Public Meeting Act: Publication was handled by the Planning Department.

3. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 22, 2014 meeting were approved by the Commissioners.

4. Shade Tree Commission Items:

New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference:

Mr. Simone reported that STC sent three attendees to the conference on 10/24 and 10/25/14 at the Crowne Plaza in Marlton, NJ. STC earned all of the CEU credits that are required for 2014 with this attendance, and the conference was also attended by John Louise and two other employees from Public Works.

Greening of Union County/Tree Selection/Site Selection (Louis Barbato Landscaping Inc.)

124 trees will be planted for \$24,676.00, not sure exactly when they will be planted this fall. Plantings planned for blocks in all four wards.

City of Plainfield Planning Division Applications

Mr. Simone consulted on Landscaping for the site on South Avenue that was formerly Fox Nursery. He recommended two London Plane Trees. He visited a garage facility at Madison and Fourth that is in a location with concrete out to the street, no tree lawns, industrial area. He recommended no trees there. From now on, when he gets consulting requests he will forward them to Commissioners for follow-up. Ms. Burgwinkle reported on the consultation for the PSEG substation construction on South Second Street. PSEG had suggested planting Hickory Trees in concrete planters on the concrete sidewalk. Trees cannot be planted in the ground because electrical lines that serve other parts of downtown are buried under the sidewalk. The site is very crowded and the sidewalk is narrow and has two curb cuts. Zoning Board of Adjustment questioned trees in planters at the site, however the resolution was delegated to Shade Tree. Mr. Simone and Ms. Burgwinkle walked the site and Mr. Simone agreed. Ms. Burgwinkle spoke with PSEG about planting no trees at the site (no concrete containers), but PSEG giving the City money to plant trees in another nearby area that needs them. Mr. Simone and Ms. Burgwinkle examined the Front and side lawn at Drake House Museum further down Front Street. There are stumps that could be removed as well as some trees in poor condition, and new trees could be planted at the site visible from Front Street. PSEG was amenable to giving the City money for trees in another location, and the Shade Tree Commissioners voted to forgo trees at the site and request money for the Drake House site. Ms. Burgwinkle will do a presentation to PSEG. STC will observe Arbor Day at Drake House.

STC 2015 Budget

Mr. Simone reported that a budget issue has arisen. In the past, the 50% rebate of tree expenditures from Greening of Union County has been deposited into an account to be held in trust for STC, and STC has used the money for more trees. The City's new Chief Financial Officer has advised that the correct accounting requires depositing the money into the City's general fund. Mr. Simone intends to meet with him to discuss this further, however, this will mean that STC will not be able to do the professional tree trimming described below that would have been done with that money.

Community Forestry CSIP Grant 2015 - Community Stewardship Incentive Practices #5 Tree Inventory and #6 Hazard Tree Assessment

The CSIP (Community Stewardship Incentive Program) grants will be available this year and STC should apply to receive help with the expense of the 2016 revision of the CFMP and the Tree Inventory. Ms. Stefel has done CSIP grant applications in the past. STC could apply for money to help with the Tree Inventory and Hazard Tree identification that are part of STC's Community Forestry Management Plan. Ms. Stefel has also completed Plainfield's Tree City application.

Tree Maintenance 2014

-Tree Guards-Ms. Spellmeyer had brought a sample of the black plastic tree guards used at UCC to the October meeting. Plainfield should order some of these by 12/31/14.

-Pruning Locations/possible Vendors (Caffrey/Daveys/Gary's)

Mr. Simone had suggested that STC should spend \$13,000 of proceeds available to us from GUC reimbursements in Fall 2014 to do professional pruning, possibly in downtown business area, as it is difficult for DPW to make time for all of the pruning necessary. He requested estimates from the above vendors, only Davey's had responded with a \$9,600 estimate. It appears as though the fact that the proceeds from GUC will go into the City general fund may mean that we cannot do this pruning this year.

Division of Recreation - American Water Grant Opportunity

Mr. Nat Singleton of the Division of Recreation intends to apply for an American Water Company Grant to develop a small environmentally focused park on the City owned lot behind Drake House that abuts the Green Brook Park. He is soliciting the support of other agencies and non-profits for the project. A discussion ensued at the meeting about the request. STC is a commission made up of volunteers and we lack expertise regarding the issues involved in establishing a park. We also have limited resources (human and financial) that we devote to completing our planned work. As a result, STC voted to make the following statement regarding the project: "Shade Tree Commission acknowledges the intent of the Division of Recreation to apply for an American Water Company grant to establish a park on City property abutting Drake House and Green Brook Park. Shade Tree will help to select plant material for the project if necessary when the project is approved."

5. Adjournment and Next Meeting:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Next meeting is January 28, 2014 at 7:30 pm in the Planning Division Conference Room. Members enjoyed snacks and thanked Mr. Kirby for his service as it was his last meeting.