

**City of Plainfield  
Shade Tree Commission  
Minutes of Meeting of January 28, 2015  
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 7:35 p.m. Present were Mr. Simone, Mary Burgwinkle, Jan Massey, Barbara Spellmeyer and Oscar Riba from the Commission. Lynne Wallace and David Frost were not present. Also present: April Stefel (Planning Division).

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

**3. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the November 19, 2014 meeting were approved by the Commissioners. There were no minutes for December 2014 as the meeting was cancelled.

**4. Shade Tree Commission Items:**

Shade Tree Commission 2014 Appointment.

Lynne Wallace who lives on Parkside Road in Ward 3 was appointed to STC by Mayor Mapp and approved by City Council at its January 20, 2015 meeting. The Commissioners look forward to working with Ms. Wallace.

Financial Report

Shade Tree Commission Budget - \$27,600.00. Membership dues have been paid to New Jersey Shade Tree Federation for 2014 (\$95) and Ms. Stefel reported having received the invoice for 2015. Also, Arbor Day Foundation/Tree City USA dues of \$15 have been paid. Ms. Stefel has sent Donna Massa of New Jersey Shade Tree Federation STC's 2015 member list.

Greening of Union County 2014-Tree Selection/Site Selection-2014. Trees were planted in November, and some homeowners were resistant to having trees planted. One homeowner took a tree down and damaged it. STC plans to bill the homeowner for the cost of the tree. Other trees that were refused were planted elsewhere. Discussion ensued about the procedure for pursuing violations against homeowners who damage trees. Ms. Massey agreed to look into the procedure. Ms. Burgwinkle suggested that language be drafted and placed on Shade Tree's portion of the website, as well as in a future Public Works mailer, reminding citizens that the City has a right of way over the strips of grass between sidewalk and curb or street, and from the street onto homeowners' properties where there are no sidewalks. Language will remind citizens that there are many benefits to trees and that they can be fined for interfering with planting or damaging trees. Ms. Burgwinkle will draft language for review by Commission and City.

Tree Maintenance. Mr. Simone asked Commissioners to take the following Ward assignments for 2015: 1st Ward, Oscar Riba and Barbara Spellmeyer; 2nd Ward, Peter Simone; 3rd Ward, Jan Massey and Lynne Wallace; and 4th Ward, Mary Burgwinkle. He remarked that he was assigning the wards early in the year so that Commissioners could drive their wards, noting trees that need maintenance and tree planting sites early in the year if they wanted to do that. A discussion ensued whether STC would continue its practice of planting trees in 2015 or use up to \$10,000 of its budget to engage contractors for tree maintenance in selected areas. This fall, Mr. Simone got bids from Gary's (no longer in business), Daveys and Caffrey. Daveys bid \$8,600 to do trimming in the downtown commercial area. More bids could be solicited from Asplundh, Riccardi and Tamke among others. Details would need to be worked out regarding instructions to the contractor on trimming

specs, among other things. Commissioners seemed to be in consensus on \$10,000 with details to be worked out. Mr. Riba said that he felt strongly that Commissioners' duties should not include actual tree trimming. Mr. Simone remarked that he does trimming because he wants to do it, no requirement. Commissioners were reminded that the 8/2011 Community Forestry Management Plan, required under the statute, will expire in 8/2016. STC needs to budget about \$3,500 for the consultant to help with the revision (must be revised every five years). STC may be able to help with the cost of tree maintenance or doing inventory or the revision if application is made this year for a CSIP (Community Stewardship Incentive Program) grant. The CSIP grant provides municipalities with funds to assist them in the implementation of forestry goals and objectives as stated in their five year community forestry management plan. Ms. Stefel has applied for these grants in the past. Finally, on maintenance, Mr. Simone asked Ms. Spellmeyer to give John Louise the information where to order 100-200 of the black plastic tree covers to protect the young trees from deer rutting.

Arbor Day 2015. STC plans to use the Drake House Museum (West Front St., 4th Ward) as the site for the Arbor Day celebration which will take place on Arbor Day, which is the last Friday in April (4/24/15). Storms have damaged trees on the front lawn, which is very large and visible from Front Street. Budget is \$3,000 due to PSEG having given the money that it would have used to plant trees in containers at another site on W. Second Street at STC's request. Decisions must be made on tree selection, possible removal of the large stump from a failed tree on the front lawn. A discussion ensued regarding maintenance of the new trees and whether STC budget money could be used to install a sprinkler system or other maintenance. Ms. Stefel did not believe that STC could do that. John Louise will need to be contacted with this information so that he can schedule it and invite school children to the ceremony. Ms. Burgwinkle will work on the program and notifying the Mayor's office. Plainfield has also had a practice of selecting a historic tree and/or an old specimen tree to be honored on Arbor Day. She nominated the Catalpa on the front lawn of 750 Belvidere Ave. A discussion ensued and Ms. Stefel pointed out a Ponderosa Pine on Park and 9th. Ms. Spellmeyer advised about a large and old Magnolia in her yard. All Commissioners should look for and nominate trees, visible from the street if possible so that citizens can see them.

2015 Roadway Improvement Projects. Mr. Simone reported that the city engineer has not provided details on projects.

New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference. Mr. Simone announced that the 2015 New Jersey Shade Tree Federation conference will be held at Bally's in Atlantic City, October 23rd and 24th. Commissioners should calendar, let Mr. Simone know if they would like to attend. Commissioners who need Core Training should plan to attend.

Rutgers "NJ Agricultural Experiment Station" CEU Courses

Mr. Simone advised that Commissioners who want to attend should let him know.

**5. Adjournment and Next Meeting:**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. Next meeting is February 25, 2014 at 7:30 pm.