

City of Plainfield
Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of Meeting of February 24, 2016 7:30 pm
Minutes of Postponed Reorganization Meeting
Plainfield City Hall, 515 Watchung Ave., Second Floor Conference Room
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

Minutes of Reorganization Meeting

1. Mary Burgwinkle ran the Reorganization Meeting in the absence of an elected Chair. She called the meeting to order at 7:25 pm. Peter Simone, Jan Massey, Ms. Burgwinkle and Barbara Spellmeyer answered the roll call. April Stefel, Planning Division Liaison to Shade Tree Commission, was also in attendance. Oscar Riba and Lynne Wallace were absent. Ms. Burgwinkle nominated Peter Simone for the office of Chair, the nomination was seconded by Ms. Massey and Mr. Simone was unanimously elected Chair. Ms. Massey nominated Ms. Burgwinkle for Secretary and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Simone. Ms. Burgwinkle was unanimously elected Secretary. The Reorganization meeting was closed at 7:27 p.m.

Minutes of Meeting of February 24, 2016

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Peter Simone, Jan Massey, Mary Burgwinkle, Barbara Spellmeyer and April Stefel, Liaison to Shade Tree Commission from Planning Division. Lynne Wallace and Oscar Riba were not present. Mr. Riba arrived at 7:35.

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

3. Approval of Minutes: The Commissioners had deferred the Reorganization Meeting and the review of the December 2015 minutes until the February 2016 meeting to allow more time for meeting with Ms. Shari Spero, CTE, the consultant who will work with STC on the 2016 revision to the Community Forestry Management Plan. The Commissioners reviewed the December 16, 2015 and the January 27, 2016 meeting minutes and they were approved as submitted.

4. Shade Tree Commission Items:

NJDEP CSIP Grants

Ms. Stefel initially passed out information on Continuing Education offerings. She then advised that the CSIP Grant is available this year, due April 12, 2016. She will prepare the grant application, requesting \$30,000. Commissioners discussed using the money for planting of 85 trees on one street, such as South Second Street in the Fourth Ward, between Grant and the City border, Ms. Burgwinkle and Mr. Simone will go to the site next week to look at possible planting sites. In kind volunteer time and possibly the amounts that PSEG will spend on landscaping on that street at the substation they are rebuilding may be used for the grant. The money would likely be used to plant Hedge Maples along the entire street, if we were successful in getting the grant.

Arbor Day

In 2015, STC held Arbor Day at Drake House Museum in the fourth ward. Mr. Simone obtained a garden plan from designer Beth Riley that was partially completed. The Commissioners agreed to complete that plan in 2016. Ms. Burgwinkle nominated the Holly Trees at 917 Stelle Avenue near the border of 925 Stelle Avenue for Specimen/Historic trees to be honored on Arbor Day.

Online webinars offering CEUs

Ms. Burgwinkle reported on attending several USDA Forest Service Urban Forest Connections Webinars that are offered approx. once a month. She attended "Remove and Repurpose: Increasing the Value of Urban Wood," a discussion of the use that Cincinnati made of the Ash trees cut down when it triaged for EAB. Other locations' uses were also discussed. She mentioned that Cincinnati cut down all street and park ash trees, preserving 400 that were in wide tree lawns not near utility wires, that they now treat for EAB. She also attended "The Forest at School: Implications for Learning". Both of these offered 1 CEU and no payment. New York City Parks Department offered "Trees Count! 2015", along with their software vendor, Azavea, to describe the NYC tree inventory and offered to share open source code. In addition, there is a free seminar offered by PSEG and New Jersey Tree Foundation on March 25, 2016 entitled the "Right Tree for the Right Place", for 3 CEUs for no tuition. Mr. Simone and Ms. Burgwinkle will RSVP.

Tree Trimming by Asplundh for PSE&G

PSE&G engaged Asplundh to do mandated tree trimming around wires. Unfortunately they overlapped with STC vendor Orr's in several places and did very severe pruning. Mr. Simone had been advised by PSE&G representative Sheridan Balmeo that door tags would be placed in the neighborhoods where trimming would take place. It does not appear as though this happened, and there was some feedback from residents. Ms. Burgwinkle agreed to contact Ms. Balmeo to discuss whether the door hanger procedure was followed. Ms. Balmeo advised that door tags are distributed when PSEG trims trees on private property, but not when trimming City owned trees in the rights of way. Their BPU procedures provide that they notify the City and the City is responsible for noticing residents (to move cars, etc.).

STC Planting Policy & Public Notification (Public Ordinances)

Ms. Burgwinkle reported that Corporation Counsel responded to her request to review our proposed notice to citizens on 1/4/16, approving the notice, but not answering the other questions in the memo. She will continue to follow up, and will prepare the draft notice for the plantings this fall and our website.

Community Forestry Management Plan

The Commissioners spent the January 2016 meeting in discussion with consultant Shari Spero, CTE. She asked for information during the month and Ms. Burgwinkle, Mr. Simone and Ms. Stefel responded. She has not received the detail on Public Works' budget. Ms. Stefel believes that she has located a source within the city to obtain that information.

PSEG Substation Projects

PSEG has been doing major construction on two electrical substations in Plainfield in the past year, and they leased a property on South Second Street downtown to store components and construction materials. Rather than restoring that lot with plantings, the City is negotiating for a contribution to the tree trust fund, as the lot is soon to be developed. Mr. Simone also described the treatment of trees and green space at another project going on at a Brownfield's site.

Bartons Nursery

Several homeowners had requested trees that did not get planted in the fall. STC used money left in our budget to have Bartons Nursery reserve the trees (Redbud for 68-70 Jefferson and an Amur Maple for 286 Leland Avenue.) Ms. Spellmeyer will contact PSEG and the water company to do the markouts and will arrange for John Louise to pick up and plant the trees later in March.

2015 Plainfield Road Improvement Projects

The City began taking trees down for the Road Improvements that will be done in the Coolidge Ave. neighborhood Brisbane Estates, with some controversy. Mr. Simone discussed having asked Councilor Brown who lives in the neighborhood for help, and he intends to follow up as the trees are planted after the roads are finished.

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m. Next meeting is March 23, 2016 at 7:30 pm.