

**Township of Colts Neck
Shade Tree Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 6, 2020 - 7:30 P.M.**

Mr. Viola read the Open Public Meetings Statement

Roll Call Ms. Riley

Present: Ms. Riley
 Mr. Nicoletti
 Mr. Viola
 Ms. Sherwood
 Ms. Stivala
 Ms. Fitzpatrick

Absent: Mr. Boak
 Ms. Eastman
 Mr. Hammond
 Ms. Coscia, STC Secretary

Also Present: Michael Massaro, 14 Moonlight Drive
 Anthony Splendorio, landscape architect from Back to Nature (via
 phone)

Approval: Draft Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2020 Motion to approve made by
 Ms. Stivala, seconded by Ms. Sherwood and carried by voice vote

Plan Review

Revised plan for plantings on landscape easement 14 Moonlight Drive

Mr Massaro brought plans showing the proposed changes in planting as discussed at the December STC meeting. Forty-five, eight foot trees (a mix of Norway and Colorado Spruce) will be planted in the easement. Anthony Splendorio, Back to Nature, confirmed that the trees will be planted 15 feet apart.

Ms Martin stated that the Shade Tree Commission can approve the plantings, but has no jurisdiction over the altered grading or retaining wall present on the revised map. Mr. Massaro and Mr. Splendorio were instructed to direct all questions about issues other than the trees to Tim Anfuso, in the Zoning Office.

Motion to approve the 14 Moonlight Drive plans made by Mr. Nicoletti and seconded by Ms. Martin. Motion carried by voice vote.

Casaburi Parking Lot, Block 46, Lot 11 – Minor Site Plan, plan prepared by A.J. Garito, dated 1-06-19. TRC scheduled 1/21/2020. STC will request that the engineer, A.J.Garito attend the next STC meeting to explain the plan.

Trump National Golf Club, Block 46, Lot 1.52 – Driving Range and Pool Area Improvements – Plans prepared by A.J. Garito dated 1-08-2020. TRC scheduled for 1/21/2020. STC will request that the engineer, AJ Garito attend the next STC meeting to explain the plan.

Board Business

Preventative Measures:

Ms Sherwood suggested measures that might improve outcomes of non-emergency situations when residents ask to remove trees or vines from easements under STC jurisdiction:

1. STC members must receive the request, as well as the address and the type of easement at least one week prior to a meeting to allow commissioners time to review the case prior to discussing.
2. When residents attend a STC meeting and some cutting is approved before residents can cut, they are required to wait for:
 - a. STC commissioners to mark approved trees and vines and document with photos
 - b. Written approval from the STC before acting

Ms. Sherwood agreed to write up a process. No action was decided.

Suggestion was made to write up a procedure for new home owners. It would be placed in a “New Homeowner Packet” and also put on website.

Cutting with STC authorization or consultation:

Several members noted that the state of NJ cut down a lot of trees on Rt 34. The Shade Tree Commission was not informed. Mr Viola will ask that STC be kept apprised of such arrangements going forward. Note: Since the meeting we learned that the town made an agreement with JCPL regarding tree removal in town. The STC was not asked for input or informed that this agreement was in place.

Grants and Tree City Status

Grants: Ms Sherwood submitted report on grant options and recommendations for 2020 that included:

1. Renew our Tree City designation
2. Work toward becoming a certified STC through the NJ DEP Community Forestry Program.
3. Apply for the NJ DEP Community Forestry Program Green Communities Grant that will provide \$3000 to help develop a 5-year tree management plan that is requisite for becoming a certified Shade Tree Commission.

Ms. Riley has not been able to locate the Tree City sign. She will work on the application.

Most grants are reimbursement grants, but Mr. Viola feels the Township Committee will not support the outlay of \$3000 despite expected reimbursement.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Viola noted that Mr. Massaro had attempted to obtain meeting minutes and that some were missing perhaps due to Ms. Coscia's absence on one date. Ms Martin stressed that we have a legal requirement to post accurate meeting minutes. The content of the minutes can impact litigation. We each need to take notes and supplement Ms. Coscia's effort as it is challenging to pick-up everything when we tend to carry on multiple conversations simultaneously. We need to redouble our efforts to actually read the draft minutes that Mr. Cosica sends for approval.

Arboretum report: No report

STC budget update: A request for increased funding was included in the budget to provide payment of registration fees for courses for STC. Ms. Martin, Ms. Sherwood and Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed the STC budget with Kathleen Capristo. She recommended that the STC request the funding for EAB treatment for this year (2019-2020) because the 2020-2021 budget will not be finished before treatment is needed. The Township Committee budget workshop will be on February 29.

Heritage Lane EBA treatment: Ms. Martin and Ms. Sherwood prepared a report for Ms. Fitzpatrick to submit to the Township Committee recommending retreatment of the 43 Ash trees on Heritage Lane for Emerald Ash Borer. The trees were previously treated in spring 2018.

Memorial Tree Program: Committeeman Viola did approve the invoice for the trees planted by Mr. Bennett. Mr Hammond had arranged with Mr. Bennett to have two trees planted to honor Mr. Fessler: one tree was to be planted, wrapped and staked during the fall of 2019 and a second in the spring of 2020. The tree planted in the fall was to be purchased using existing Memorial Tree Program funds. The second tree will be paid for by the Fessler family who agreed to donate \$600 for the tree. Mr. Bennett planted both trees, did not stake or wrap them, and submitted the invoice to the town. Ms. Stivala and Ms. Fitzpatrick will confirm the details. Ms Stivala will work with Mr. Hammond to have Mr. Bennett return to wrap and stake both trees. A Memorial Plaque is needed. Mr. Boak may have a source, or Ms. Martin said Rutgers may do a plaque at cost. The plaque should be covered by the donation from the Fessler family.

Mr. Viola will invite Kathleen Capristo to meet with the STC some evening before a Township Committee meeting. The purpose will be to educate the STC commission regarding how we can interact with the administrative staff more efficiently.

Liaison report: Ms Fitzpatrick

Plans for the new police station and courthouse were publicly presented on January 29th. The cost to residents will be between \$40 to \$80 of property tax per year for a home valued at \$800, 000. The plan was presented to the seniors and was well received. Affordable housing plans are still in litigation.

Minutes approved March 5, 2020 (AS/MN)