

Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2024

Present: Sandy Batty, Dan Amato, Marnie Vyff, Lucas Stelling, Doren Greene, Chris Cannon (via Zoom)

May Minutes - Passed as written

Recaps/Old Business - Garden Club display and seedling giveaway. Sandy put together a display. Several people came by. Two people expressed an interest in having a tree planted in front of their houses. One also had a tree of concern, which Dan investigated.

The Hapgoods construction/parking situation, Sandy provided comments saying that if they are proposing any changes in landscaping that Hapgoods should come and testify to that and indicate if they will be removing trees. Right now, the application does not indicate that Hapgoods intends to remove trees.

Tree Removal/Replacement Ordinance - The Manager's report in the June 10th Council meeting agenda contained the ordinance with red-lined changes, but STC needs clarification if it is going to be on the June 24 agenda. Chris Cannon did not attend the June 10 Council meeting, so he was unsure. Sandy requested that everyone review the ordinance in the agenda from the June 10 Manager's report and consider attending the June 24th meeting if the ordinance is on that agenda. STC discussed the ordinance and its implications re: stormwater management. Sandy's contact at the NJDEP said STC is not delinquent on adopting the ordinance if we are working through it. Lucas asked if we got clarity on the years of responsibility issue for homeowners, but we don't believe we have resolution on that yet.

Tree ROW inspections - Updated inventory has been sent out by Sandy. Sandy mentioned printing out as reference the ROW requirements for all the streets in town. Dan's strategy for the inventory has been to remove the notations on removals and future opportunities. Dan offered Excel assistance for those who may want it to help manage their respective inventories and the master file.

Sustainable Jersey - Marnie said it's time to apply for the accreditation again. The STC can add about 50 points to what is being put together. Town needs 350 points to attain silver status. Updated ordinance is 10 points already. The other 40 come from hazard tree inventory, tree replacement program, and community forestry management plan. Marnie shared that she needs tree removal data from more than 2 years ago. The application due date is July 31, so by the end of this month, Marnie would like to have the actions written for STC member review before submitting. Marnie will email the STC members when the draft is complete.

Student Members - No applications so far. Calvin expressed an interest in staying on, and he will not need to submit another application but should express his interest to the Borough Clerk. The STC has only one student member at this point, so is searching for another.

Liaison Reports

High School - No member present. No updates.

Environmental Commission - Marnie no longer on environmental commission. No updates.

Woodlands Committee - Woodlands was at the Council meeting on Monday to discuss the red trail in the Tourne. Morris County Parks has offered to redesign the trail for free to accommodate bikers, but Mountain Lakes would have to agree to designate the trail as multi-use as it is everywhere else. Town Council was concerned about liability. This was only preliminary.

Other Business - Discussion of the policy to not include ashes as part of memorial plantings. Lucas asked STC members to email him if they find a good spot to plant during ROW walks this summer. Marnie suggested drumming up interest in plantings - Sandy suggested the Borough blast in the fall (September), closer to planting time. STC discussed trees that were indicated to remove in years past that had not come down. Sandy will follow up with Mitchell to see if charges have been processed for work that hasn't happened. Marnie suggested following up to check to see that indicated removals have actually been addressed. Lucas asked about how removals are audited.

Meeting adjourned 8:03 PM EST
Minutes taken by Dan Amato