

**Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of December 9, 2020**

Members present: Chris Capodanno, Sandy Batty, Lucas Stelling, Andrew Armani,
Borough Council liaison: Lauren Barnett
Student members: Rebecca Hirschfeld
Guest: Dan Amato

Minutes - The November Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

Membership - Dan Amato had met a few members of the STC during tree planting time. He attended the meeting to learn about the Commission. Members explained what the STC does, with the tree survey being the biggest responsibility. The STC would like to have Dan join the Commission.

Tree Planting update The Borough planted about 50 trees in November, including 2 at Wildwood and 2 at Briarcliff and several Island Beach and Birchwood parking lot. Also eight went in along the Boulevard, with the remainder in the rights of way in front of residents' lots. Lucas said that he had a tremendous help from his wife, Adrienne Cook, who measured locations. Some residents responded late and so we might consider whether to plant additional trees in the spring. We will need water bags for the new trees. It was noted that we have seen a lot more trees being taken down. The Borough will charge the first \$3,000 of Cerbo's tree planting bill to the Island Beach construction for the trees planted there.

Development Projects – The Planning Board will begin review of the Highview application with a Zoom meeting on Dec. 17.

The STC wrote to Pine Edge Homeowners' Association regarding Borough Engineer's letter on planting by the Sunrise Assisted Living replacing the trees they removed in addition to those indicated on the development plan.

Residential Issues/Queries. The STC answered a query by a resident that the Borough took down a 225-year-old tree on Condit due to curb work.
Many residents commented favorably on the new tree plantings.

Liaison updates

Our Council Liaison reported Mountain Lakes received a Governor's environmental excellence award for the rain garden at Birchwood Lake.

MLHS Student Liaison reported that the environmental club met on Dec, 8, but as the school is meeting virtually, they are not able to work on the botanical garden right now. They encouraged planting on the islands in the parking lot when construction is completed at the MLHS.

The Environmental Commission looked into 2021 planting on Route 46 and wants to have a subcommittee on the tree planting. The STC briefly discussed the pros and cons of planting on residential properties rather than on Route 46, as the highway planting could be very expensive and the trees might be difficult to maintain. Route 46 is very visible and planting in the median would help with road noise and give a good introduction to the town. This Tree Replacement Fund could not cover the total cost of planting and we shouldn't deplete the entire Fund in one year. The Highway plantings probably should not come out of the traditional Shade Tree Budget, but perhaps we try to get support from businesses on Route 46, as a stand-alone project.

Next year we will need to have members take on responsibility on tree planting, prune and remove, citizen education. The Tree City application needs to be finished.

Dan Amato said he would be interested in joining the STC. The Council just needs a brief letter from him expressing his interest.