

Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2020

Meeting by Zoom

Present: Chris Capodanno, Sandy Batty, Brett Lane, Lucas Stelling, Marnie Vyff, and student member Jackie Edwards

Minutes of May meeting - approval postponed till July

Cerbo's Parsippany Greenhouse and Garden Center

Cerbo's has managed the Borough of Mountain Lakes Plantings and is the most local, native and sustainable Nursery. Tony Cerbo (owner) attended as a guest for Shade Tree questions on Best Practices and open Q&A

Cerbo's installs trees for about 40 local municipalities

As discussion took place on the Hannover NJ Voucher Program which uses revenue outside of the Tax based Budget for new Tree planting. Those funds may come from various sources, including collections on Tree Removals, Tree Violation/Removal Fines, Public & Private Fundraising, and local event fundraising.

The trees are smaller than the 2.5 inch caliper than the Tree's we plant under our budget but the process may be useful to increase Tree Canopy Restoration in Mountain Lakes based on the significant loss over the recent years and short/long term impact on the character and aesthetics.

New Tree Planting in Mountain Lakes

Currently we are planting about 24 Tree's per year and losing about 225 Tree's per year, so new ideas were discussed on how to maintain and restore the native Tree's and character.

Voucher Program we discussed which would allow for non-Taxed based Tree Planting using the Borough's leveraged pricing advantage to be made accessible to residents to plant on their properties. The Shade Tree would review Fundraising, place order to the Nursery via the Boro, and the Resident would receive a voucher and take full liability.

It was agreed that to start a trial roll-out in 2020 is possible based on the funds raised by the Shade Tree Commission already. The purpose would be to improve the Borough's tree canopy and to raise awareness and enthusiasm about planting trees. It would be important that the program was objective and accessible equally to all residents, and no liability would be assumed by the Borough while also increasing Tree Planting without further Tax costs.

Further actions will be to request the Town Attorney to review what a proper Liability Waiver would read, and as needed a sample Voucher may be available from Cerbo's. Final structure on pricing and distribution (ie. announcement, lottery, first come first serve). Public Relations and engagement on Tree Canopy Sustainability and Planting in general.

P&R 2020 Walks and Sheets

Mitchell said that he downloaded all the tree inventory information on to a laptop, which is ready for Marnie to pick up. He also asked if Marnie could download all the information into a file so that the data fields can be reviewed and the STC can decide which should be kept. The streamlined database would then be converted to an Excel file and saved to the Cloud.

Student Liaison Report.

Jackie mentioned that she is looking at trees on school property after construction is finished. Environmental club hasn't met in a while due to social distancing.

Phyllis is going to set up an interview with Rebecca Hirschfeld who has applied for student liaison. Jackie will participate with the interview. Jackie has to apply again for this school year.

Resident Inquiries

In the future, inquiries will be referred to the STC member in charge of the area where the problem has been noted.

Pine Edge. Marnie looked at the two pine trees in right of way, which she said are dead or dying. Corner of Roberts and Arden newly planted sycamores are dropping leaves but Lucas looked at them and believes they will recover. We will keep a watch in case of the possibility of fungus. Kenilworth. Bret said the tree was on school property, so not STC responsibility.

Website Development (The STC members looked at the ML Historic Perseveration website as a model for use to create a similar menu on the left. Mitchell said a major change to the STC pages would cost \$600. Brett will see if they can get the framework set up.

Development Projects –

Island Beach. STC should inspect Island beach to see how many trees came down and where new trees should be planted. The site probably won't be ready for planting till September.

Woodlands Committee Update. Chris and Brett met with the Chair of Woodlands, Steve Hercek and talked about their legacy tree program.

Environmental Commission Update Marnie said the Plastic bag ban was discussed and carried at the Council meeting on June 8.

New Shade Tree Members, We all need to recruit as we are down two members. Our current arborist is not on contract. We might invite another arborist for an interview.

Meeting adjourned