

Meeting of the Mountain Lakes, NJ Shade Tree Commission
Wednesday April 12, 2023 - 7 pm

Members in Attendance: Sandy Batty, Chris Capodanno, Lucas Stelling, Phyllis Deering, Doreen Greene, Cath Mitchell, Marnie Vyff.

Chris Cannon (Council Liaison)

Student Liaisons, Margaret and Rebecca were unavailable due to Spring Break and sent their apologies.

1. The March minutes were passed as written.

2. Arbor Day Report from Phyllis.

Phyllis met with Beth Azar (the Elementary School Principal) and told her she was being honored this year. She can pick a tree and a location.

Janet Horst and Jackie Bay (Junior Nature Club) are focusing on Pollinators for Arbor Day with Janet reading a story, like last year.

Publicity for the event will be via the Borough Blast and the "Backpack" for the students.

Marnie is sending the flier from last year for Phyllis to print off.

Phyllis has sent an invitation to the Borough for the Mayor or a representative to attend so that the Proclamation can be read.

The Arbor Day Foundation has given Mountain Lakes the Tree City award again this year, which will also be mentioned at Arbor Day.

Doreen offered to help Phyllis with Arbor Day.

3. Seedlings Distribution

We received 200 saplings, less than what we requested. Kindergarten students, 72 in total, will be receiving saplings at Arbor Day (fewer saplings so a limited number this year for students.)

Trout Derby is on the 22nd of April and Phyllis will have the saplings for distribution at this event. (We do not know the varieties yet.) The remaining will go to Doreen for Woodlands to use.

4. Setback Ordinance Revision

Sandy explained that when a setback tree management plan is required, the ordinance does not state that the number of trees being taken down needs to be specified. This needs revising. A question was raised about giving an option to replace trees instead of paying into the fund. Replacement of trees is definitely an option but would require more oversight and administration and the wording for commercial properties vs residential is not the same. At the moment the setback tree management plan does not require a fee to be paid for nonresidential properties. This wording needs to be changed.

There was further discussion regarding a cap for commercial developers when removing large numbers of trees, which some members felt was not in accordance with Shade Tree philosophy.

Chris moved to present the up-dated ordinance recommendation to the Council as Sandy has written it.

Marnie 2nd.

All were in favor except Lucas who was opposed because the cap was not included.

Liaison Reports

Environmental Commission

Marnie reported that Jackie Bay is working on a flier for the community on gardening in an environmentally friendly way.

There will be a promotion at the Trout Derby for electric leaf blowers.

Marnie will be there with the Green Team and the Environmental Commission to promote environmental awareness.

Sandy pointed out the need for awareness regarding the free trees from the STC.

Marnie suggested a subgroup should be formed to brainstorm uses for the Fund money and

Lucas suggested we block out 15 minutes of the May meeting to discuss this.

Sandy will re-circulate the Resolution so we have the guidelines for the fund money.

Woodlands

Doren reported that they have a discount at Anchor Hardware for electric leaf blowers. The information will be at their table for the Trout Derby.

There is now agreement on both sides regarding trees in the named Borough Parks vs "Pocket Parks," the smaller Borough-owned parcels throughout the town.

Bob Dewing will be in touch with Marnie regarding the trees.

Other Business

Sandy asked Marnie about a resident concern in Midvale Park. Marnie had investigated and there were trees leaning towards the resident's backyard which should be taken down.

Sandy has been in touch with the Arborist to look at our parks which will happen when the leaves are out.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Lucas, Chris 2nd at 7:56 pm.