

Shade Tree Commission Meeting - June 21, 2023

Present: S. Batty, L. (and baby E!) Stelling, D. Amato C. Mitchell, C. Capodanno, P. Deering, D. Greene

1. Minutes - May Minutes were accepted unanimously as written.

2. Use of Shade Tree Trust Fund - Sandy contacted Mitchell regarding the budget and the resident incentive to prune program. Mitchell said there's nothing legally preventing the incentive. Residents would have to apply, submit receipts to be reimbursed. A concern was raised by a Council member that public funds would be going to residents. Lucas pointed out that the public funds would be going to address a public issue - the at-risk trees in the right-of-way. Sandy suggested drafting an educational flyer for the residents about why trees need to be pruned, how the program is offered, and how to apply. The program is still pending approval from the town Council. Chris Capodanno provided specific financials explaining why this program is a good idea. Sandy shared that she asked Mitchell about the amount in the trust fund, but did not get clarification on the exact amount. STC spoke about the amount to make available as part of the program - around \$10,000 seems right. How to address who gets it? It was agreed it should be first come, first serve, giving everyone has access to it. Further conversation was had around this being a responsible use of public funds.

3. Educational Flyer - Lucas offered to draft something over the summer. We need to deliver a presentation to the town Council as well. Sandy and Cath Mitchell offered to help support the development of the materials. Lucas said that he will share any materials as they are developed.

Another group representing members of the town's environmental committees sent out an educational flyer about lawn maintenance, leaf blowers, etc. Sandy was invited to the group meeting, and STC was offered the autumn spot in the town notification rotation. The pruning incentive program could benefit from a program like this, and discussion was had around whether a paper flyer was needed. STC could use recycled paper as a PR message as well. The cost was around \$700 for the paper flyer, but perhaps STC doesn't need to spend that much. STC could also use it as a means to get out the message about asking residents for additional ROW locations to plant new shade trees.

4. Prune and Remove Walks - No questions asked about the prune and remove inventory list. Sandy offered to print a copy for anyone who might need it. Be mindful of new trees to add if filtering the list down.

5. Candidates for Student Members - Dan shared that he connected with the one applicant to date. STC agreed to vote by email after the application deadline June 30, 2023. Sandy will send a note to the clerk about the open positions in town, and a note to the rest of the STC reminding of the impending vote.

6. Liaison Reports - MLHS liaisons not in attendance. Chris Capodanno shared what the environmental commission is working on - there is some input on the borough hall landscaping/tree planting. Garden club expressed that they do not have the bandwidth to maintain any more gardens at this point. Cath Mitchell suggested putting in low maintenance

native plantings. Doren had nothing from the woodlands committee. Sandy inquired about a new trail. Doren said that Woodlands is working on a trail by Birchwood.

7. Other Business - 1 Hillside Sandy had talked to the resident who is concerned about a tree planted by the STC affected by insects (ants?). The resident was worried that the insects will spread to other trees and the bark looks unsightly, and had previously requested that it be removed. Chris said that two years ago, the arborist advised treating the tree with something offered at Cerbo's. Chris is forwarding the notes and email about the history of the tree.

Dead trees – Sandy said she was advised that one of the trees planted on the Boulevard in 2021 had died. Chris said that Cerbo's guarantees the new trees for two years. Sandy will contact Cerbo's to let them know of the dead tree, but we will wait till the fall to replace, so that the replacement can be planted when we plant the trees for the rest of the town.

Highlands - Chris inquired about Sandy's involvement in the Borough committee considering Mountain Lakes' conformance with the NJ Highlands Regional Master Plan. Sandy confirmed that she is a part of the Borough committee. The next Council meeting will have a discussion about the Highlands committee's report. Chris said he would send the STC members a copy of the presentation about the Highlands conformance received by the Environmental Commission.