

Borough of Emerson, NJ  
Shade Tree Commission  
Meeting, June 10, 2020

This meeting, held virtually on gotomeeting and in the Chambers of Borough Hall was called to order by Chairperson Margaret Boyce at 7:45 pm. Chairperson Boyce read the Preamble. Ms. Shust sat in as interim secretary.

Roll call was taken

Margaret Boyce	Present
Joseph Polvere	Present
Fred Maltzan	Present
Jessica Fricke	Present
Maria Buchert	Absent
Steve Frassa	Present
Councilman Hoffman	Present

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

2020 Mid-March Planting

Chairperson Boyce thanked Mr. Frassa and Mr. Maltzan for their hard work in getting the spring planting done.

Chairperson Boyce mentioned the Arbor Day tree, which does not seem to be in good condition. The bark is falling from the tree. Mr. Frassa advised the Commission that the tree that was planted in a swamp white oak, which does shed its bark. He said we could watch to see if it thrives, but said it is not an \$ 800 tree.

Mr. Frassa continued that he had issued a list of trees that should be planted in the Borough. He said if the guidelines had been followed they would have gotten a better quality tree. He said this tree had not been trimmed of its secondary growth and he had no idea how the bole root was trimmed. He wondered if there was varied pricing on the type and quality of tree. He asked what was ordered. Ms. Shust referred to the invoice, which stated "White Oak".

Councilman Hoffman said the truth of the matter is that the wrong type of tree was planted and what was the Commission going to do about it.

Mr. Frassa said there was another tree at the Gordo residence, at 23 Tarnapaul, which was dying and needed to be replaced. Forcelatti needed to be contacted to have the tree replaced as soon as possible at their expense, since it was a sickly tree from day one.

Mr. Maltzan said the Commission needed to be more diligent in regard to plantings, to watch for the health and appearance of the trees. Being sure to check for trimming of secondary growth, as well as the condition of the bole. He said there should be a sub-committee to review the type of tree to be planted in what area.

Mr. Frassa said he would like to deviate from past plantings in local areas, where one type of tree was planted in one area and another type in a different area. He said he would like to see the varieties mixed where possible. Currently there are over 100 trees which need to be removed, for many reasons, some planted in a wrong area, some overgrown and deformed and weak,

some damaged by storms and there are some that are just dangerously close to damaging homes.

Mr. Frassa said there are trees that are 300 years old, which is not old by tree standards. But because of where and how they were planted may have to be removed. He is watching those.

Mt. Maltzan added the website should be updated to create a friendlier advisory center on the care and selection of trees. He also commented that he would like to have the website more interactive. Have the Shade Tree forms on the website for residents to complete. Chairperson Boyce said she had been in contact with the Administration and was told the website could not be updated, as there was no money in the budget. Councilman Hoffman said he would look into it. Ms. Shust advised the Commission that forms could be uploaded onto the website, but they could not be completed and submitted through the website. They had to be manually completed, saved and emailed to the Commission.

Mr. Polvere agreed having a booklet and all the forms in one place would be an advantage. And if there were a way to make it interactive that would be great.

Fred wanted to know if there could be a subcommittee that would enter all the information and update the progress of each tree in the spreadsheet. At this time, Ms. Shust will make the entries until such a committee is formed.

Mr. Maltzan went on to his discussion with Phil of the Board of Education. He said there was enthusiasm to work together, but the timing was not good due to the pandemic situation. He said to reach out to the BOE after the first of year. Phil did mention to him that they were looking to plant at least 10 trees at Memorial and thought a joint purchase might be beneficial pricewise to the BOE and the STC.

Chairman Boyce went on to the removal of trees on Ackerman and asked the Councilman for an update. Mr. Hoffman said he had not received an update from Mr. Silva, but that the construction was nowhere near seeking a C/O.

Chairman Boyce asked Ms. Fricke and Mr. Polvere about the Arbor Day ceremony. The tree had been planted, but she was hopeful there would be a ceremony of some type. She thought it would be a good idea to start research into deaths in the past year and to be sure to include any COVID 19 deaths. It is a tedious and time consuming job.

Ms. Fricke said it is hard to determine a date for a ceremony, especially if a second outbreak should occur. Mr. Polvere said the colleges are trying to determine fall breaks and were leaning toward closing for Thanksgiving, rather than a fall break. He said a lot depends on the results of how social distancing is followed and if there is another outbreak. He would like to table until the August meeting,

Chairperson Boyce said they do not have to worry about their Tree City status since the tree is already planted but would like to have a ceremony if at all possible. In the meantime she suggested research begin on those to be named during the ceremony. And perhaps a system developed for future years.

Mr. Polvere said he would start with the obits, funeral homes, senior homes, etc. Councilman Hoffman said he did not know if the Borough had records of who passed during the year, but they could check with Jane or Coleen.

Mr. Maltzan said he surveyed every tree that was dead, dying or dangerous in the Borough... He sometimes took his wife or daughter to assure the residents that he was not going to cause a problem. He asked for help from the Commission in listing and categorizing the information he has gathered. He said he had a hard copy of the information, which he would leave in the office for Ms. Shust.

Mr. Frassa spoke about the work to be done in removing trees by Ace. He said he received a price of \$ 9,700 for the removal of 14 trees. He had spoken with the CCFO, Lauren, and freed up \$12,000 of the frozen funds for this purpose. He said he wanted to leave an emergency fund of \$2,000. He wanted to know how to determine where to start, Chairperson Boyce told him to start at the top with the most dangerous trees. Mr. Frassa said he monitors the trees every week, and the situation may change due to storm damage, or nature.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the \$9,700 spending to remove dangerous trees, which was made by Ms. Fricke, Chairperson Boyce made the second. Ms. Fricke, Ms. Boyce, Mr. Frassa, Mr. Maltzan and Mr. Polvere were in favor of releasing the funds.

The chair asked Councilman Hoffman if he had any update on additional members for the Commission, she said she had recommended Mr. Russel Radil, who is a neighbor and whom she feels would be a good addition. Councilman Hoffman advised the members that there was no update at this time, hopefully by the next meeting.

Chairperson Boyce told the members that each of them should become familiar with the responsibility of being Chair, not only Mr. Polvere who is Vice Chair. There is much to be learned and she is learning more every day. It is important for the commission to function properly that each member contributes.

Chairperson Boyce wondered if having a student liaison would be a good idea. Perhaps someone interested in computer technology who could help Fred and Steve with their entries.

Councilman Hoffman reminded the Chair that only the Mayor can appointment members to the Commission.

Mr. Maltzan reminded the Commission that this was not the time to request anything from the Board of Ed, as they are extremely busy, perhaps for the next year.

Councilman Hoffman in response to a request by Mr. Frassa and the Chair said he would request the budget information and the balances from the CFO.

Chairperson Boyce spoke about the damage being done in Emerson Woods. There is a troop attaching bird boxes to the trees, causing damage. They are being screwed into the trees in the pond area.

Councilman Hoffman said the troop was probably not aware of the regulations and does anyone know which troop it is and if they can be contacted. He said since there was no approval, the bird boxes can be removed and stored or destroyed if no one claims them. Councilman Hoffman stated the boxes should be unscrewed bottom first to remove. Mr. Maltzan asked if the troop was known. Chairperson Boyce said there was a troop #67 on the boxes. She tried to locate them only to find out they are from Morristown.

Councilman Hoffman said to refer the matter to the DPW because they are so high. The chair stated they need to check for nests before removing.

Chairperson Boyce mentioned the tree removal at 87 Linden. There had been a Police Report issued, #20-1076, filed 10:00 am on June 8, 2020. The Report had been taken, but there was no further action by the Police 'Dept.

Mr. Frassa had followed up and said he was told this has been a feud between the two neighbors for many years. The neighbor, Mr. Watkins of 83 Linden, cut down and removed the trees in the middle of the night, leaving the stumps. He said he had tried to reach out to the owner and the neighbor several times, but has received no response. Steve has pictures of the stumps, one a 4 inch red cedar planted 8 ft. from the curb, the other a 1-1/4" sugar maple, planted approximately three feet from the curb line. The red cedar was a substantial tree; the sugar maple was very young. The trees are actually on Emerson property, planted by the resident of 87 Linden. Mr. Frassa was unable to speak with Mr. Watkins. Mr. Frassa said there were also questions about the property line, as Mr. Mills referred to a point in the street as the property line, but no other point of reference. Councilman Hoffman said that cul de sac had not been property planted when developed.

Councilman Hoffman said the Commission needed information from Mr. Watkins and they should ask the police to follow up.

Mr. Frassa said the residents don't really know him, and wondered if a shirt and door knockers can be obtained for him, so people will recognize him when he comes to the door or will call him back when seeing a door knocker.

Mr. Frassa asked for a vote on the funds for Ace Tree Removal. Mr. Maltzan made the motion, second by Ms. Fricke. Chairperson Boyce, Mr. Polvere, Ms. Fricke, Mr. Frassa and Mr. Maltzan voted yes.

Ms. Shust said there was an invoice to cover her expense of \$19 for the Gotomeeting fees. Mr. Maltzan made a motion to approve that invoice, second was offered by Mr. Frassa. Chairperson Boyce, Mr. Maltzan, Mr. Polvere, Ms. Fricke and Mr. Frassa voted yes

Ms. Shust suggested the Forcelatti bill be approved with the deduction of the cost of the sickly Maple and incorrect swamp white oak. The Chairperson and/or delegate would be in touch with Forcelatti in regard to credit/replacement/reduction of price. Mr. Maltzan made a motion to approve the bill with the deduction of the two trees, which totaled \$1,708.00, second was offered by Mr. Frassa. Chairperson Boyce, Mr. Polvere, Ms. Fricke, Mr. Frassa and Mr. Maltzan all agreed to pay the reduced invoice total.

Mr. Maltzan made a motion to obtain two shirts for Mr. Frassa with insignia and Shade Tree Inspector written on it, the door knockers and a badge, second was offered by Ms. Fricke. Chairperson Boyce, Mr. Polvere, Ms. Fricke, Mr. Maltzan and Mr. Frassa all voted yes.

### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Councilman Hoffman suggested that the owner of the residence on Arthur Ave be invited to the next meeting to explain why he planted the tree without permission.

Mr. Maltzan said there is a possibility an interactive module may have to be purchased to give the STC the capabilities they want. He would look into it with Coleen in the office.

CLOSED MEETING:

Chairperson Boyce asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public, which was made by Mr. Frassa, second was offered by Mr. Maltzan. Chairman Boyce, Ms. Fricke, Mr. Polvere, Mr. Maltzan and Mr. Frassa were in favor. Ms. Shust was asked to leave the meeting and the meeting was closed to the public.

At 820 pm Ms. Shust was asked to return to the meeting, and reopen it to the public.

Chairperson Boyce made a motion to appoint Ms. Shust as Shade Tree Commission Secretary until the end of the current year, second was offered by Mr. Polvere. Chairperson Boyce, Mr. Polvere, Mr. Maltzan, Mr. Frassa and Ms. Fricke were in favor of the appointment.

Since there was no other business to discuss the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Mr. Maltzan, second was offered by Ms. Fricke, all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm,

Respectfully submitted,  
M. Marie Shust  
Commission Secretary