



*Borough of Atlantic Highlands*  
*Shade Tree Commission*



100 First Avenue • Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716  
 Tel: (732) 291-1444 • Fax: (732) 291-9725

**Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission**  
**Meeting at Atlantic Highlands Borough Hall**  
**September 13, 2023 - 7:00 PM**

1. The monthly meeting was called to order by Ken Grasso at 7 p.m. in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present: Fred Callis, Ashley Cruz, Ken Grasso, Janet Grote, Ed Kenney, Ben Shmoll, Bill Thorne, Mary Trank; Vito Colasurdo, Lori Hohenleitner (council liaisons).

Not present: none

2. Minutes: Bill Thorne made a motion to accept the August 2023 minutes. Fred seconded the motion. Janet Grote, Ed Kenney, and Ben Schmoll abstained. All others voted in favor.

3. Correspondence: Tree planting requests and tree removal/trim permits were received.

4. Treasurer’s Report: The treasurer’s report was presented by Bill Thorne. Ashley Cruz made a motion to accept the treasurer’s report. Ken Grasso seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Treasurer’s report:

Opening balance	\$12,845.91 (August 10, 2023)
Deposits	0
Expenses	0
Closing balance	\$12,845.91 (September 13, 2023)

5. Old Business:

a. Tribute Tree Plaque Modernization Progress Update: Fred Callis reported that five biographies are finished. The goal is to have five plaques and the accompanying webpages complete by the end of the year.

b. Fall Planting: Ashley Cruz proposed requiring standards for contractors hired to plant trees on borough property. Any contractor hired must agree to these standards. Requirements will include, for example: removing the burlap and wire basket; backfilling around the tree, etc. Ms. Cruz would like to prepare these tree planting standards in advance of the fall planting.

Ms. Cruz has a list of tree requests from residents. Additionally, she and Bill Thorne toured the Harbor and identified locations at which to plant five new trees.

The municipality is going to be installing benches in memory of Mr. Walter Curry - probably three - likely one in the Harbor, and two more near the Fire Department, and/or the First Aid Squad, and/or Veterans



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Park. Tribute Trees will be planted near each bench. Fred Callis suggested a tree be planted in tribute to Jacob Hoffman. Including the Tribute Trees, a total of fifteen trees will be planted.

Ken Grasso made a motion to budget up to \$5,000 for the fall planting. Fred Callis seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

c. Revised Tree Ordinance, Tree Planting Form Review: This discussion did not occur. Ken Grasso said he had no comments. Bill Thorne said he had no comments. A sub-committee of those with comments will meet to discuss the ordinance. The revised tree ordinance will be discussed by the full Commission at the October meeting.

d. Newsletter: Bill Thorne reported on the plan to start a newsletter. He distributed draft articles. Proposed publication month is November. The group discussed how the newsletter might be distributed (mail). Councilwoman Hohenleitner explained this would be a bulk mailing through the municipality, with a request to the post office to send to zip code 07716 while eliminating addresses that are 07716 but not Atlantic Highlands residences.

### 6. New Business:

a. Maintenance Work Completed by DPW: Invasive shrubs and an invasive tree on Hennessey Blvd. were removed in the hope that a failing native tree there will have a better chance of survival. Shade Tree Commission filed this request with Borough Administrator Rob Ferrugina, who passed it on to DPW Director Jimmy Phillips. The Commissioners are appreciative that the work was completed quickly.

Ashley Cruz said that when she and Bill Thorne visited the Harbor she saw other tree maintenance issues she may request be addressed. If so, she will submit the requests to Mr. Ferrugina.

b. Resident/Nursery Program: The Fair Haven Shade Tree Commission has begun a “resident tree-buying program.” It has formed a partnership with Fernbrook Farms Nursery. Their goal is to maintain the Fair Haven canopy by guiding residents in purchasing new trees to replace those which are aged and dying. As a program like this might be suitable for Atlantic Highlands, Shade Tree Commission is going to research resident tree-buying programs.

c. Touch-a-Truck is October 14. Ken Grasso requested Shade Tree Commissioners’ presence.

d. Borough Code Enforcement: Code enforcement officer Rich Colangelo contacted Ken Grasso via email to inform the Shade Tree Commission that Code Enforcement, along with DPW, has identified several shade trees impeding municipal trucks and fire department apparatus traveling along public roads. According to Mr. Colangelo, while the trees are not unhealthy, residents will be receiving notice that the trees need to be pruned or, in some cases, removed. If a resident does not comply, the resident will be billed for pruning or removal of the tree. Mr. Colangelo referenced ordinance 340 and included photographs with his email.



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Ken Grasso is going to contact Mr. Colangelo to request the address of each tree, the “rule” each tree is breaking, and what the cost will be to the resident if the municipality removes the tree.

e. 160 First Ave: For the borough engineer’s review of the proposed mixed use building at 160 First Ave, a Shade Tree Commission review of trees at the site was required. This needed to occur prior to the Planning Board special meeting scheduled for September 19, 2023. Councilwoman Hohenleitner brought the applicant’s plans to the meeting and showed the plans, including photographs, to the Commissioners. The Commissioners viewed the plans and discussed the application.

The group agreed on the following:

The Shade Tree Commission is opposed to the loss of any healthy trees from the Atlantic Highlands canopy, including those in the streetscape of East Garfield Ave and First Ave.

The Commission requests the Planning Board require submission of an existing tree protection plan for 160 First Ave. prior to the Planning Board approving the application. The applicant must be required to follow the plan.

The Commission requests the Planning Board require submission of a report detailing the impact to the trees on adjacent properties prior to the Planning Board approving the application. The applicant must be required to submit an existing tree protection plan for trees on adjacent properties. The applicant must be required to follow the plan.

7. Public comment: No public comment.

8. Ken Grasso made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. Fred Callis seconded the motion. All voted in favor.