



Borough of Atlantic Highlands
Shade Tree Commission



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

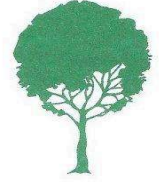
Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission (STC)
Meeting at Atlantic Highlands Borough Hall
August 14, 2024, 7pm

1. The monthly meeting was called to order by Ashley Cruz at 7:03pm in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act
 - a. Present: Ashley Cruz, Ben Schmoll, Frank Gargione, Janet Grote, Bill Thorne; Vito Colasurdo (council liaison); in addition, Laura Redmond (potential member, application has been submitted)
 - b. Not present: Ed Kenney; James Murphy (council liaison)
2. Minutes – three months to approve (no-one saw May in real time, no quorum last month for both May and June approval)
 - a. May and June notes - BT motions to approve, JG seconds, all in favor
 - b. Table July notes until next meeting
3. Correspondence –
 - a. Removals: solar panel installation, storm damage, unsafe/dead/dying trees, house painting, pruning, excavation for addition
 - b. One request
 - c. Monmouth County Parks mailer
4. Treasurer's Report –
 - a. \$250 sent to Arts Council (see handout)
 - b. Opening balance: \$12,223.00 / closing balance: \$11,973.99
 - c. July and August budget - BT motions to approve, AC seconds, all in favor
 - d. VC talked to Rob about incoming annual budget, it's \$15K for the fiscal year and it is available
 - i. Will they issue a check for deposit? VC will notify Rob Ferragina that we need a check to deposit
 - ii. The amount is good for projected planting budget
 - iii. For previous fiscal year, how did DPW come up with the \$5K fee/deduction? For future reference: is this policy? Was it to cover storm damage? VC remembers it happening, not the details but he is almost certain it went to DPW
 - Jimmy Phillips had at one time requested a \$6K donation to trim Veterans Park trees but RF said that wasn't our budget (per BT)
 - Check with RF to check with new CFO (Rick Yanis) to confirm full amount and how/why DPW money is pulled from STC budget, what is policy? BS will ask as Treasurer via email to/via RF and RY
5. Old Business –



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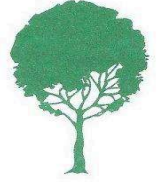
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- a. Fall tree planting: 16 total, AC has put all private requests in spreadsheet, in addition there are the two for South Avenue Park and two for the jug handle, AC will add new correspondence and email requests, next steps –
 - i. Determining locations/cross streets for all requests: AC and LR will contact people and take a look at sites between August and September
 - ii. For those that didn't select a species, we can select based on location
 - iii. Formalize the tree list by October to get pricing and get plantings scheduled for November/December
 - We liked the installation company we used last year
 - The nursery/supplier was fine but we should check others for pricing (*LP Statile was mentioned, unsure if this was who we used last year or a suggestion for new estimates this year*)
 - iv. AC will share the Google sheet with everyone
 - v. In addition: Adding a buffer layer/row of plantings of trees along remediation site closer to the street (there are already some trees setback from the curb) along West Highland/Hennessy; replacing the large elm that was lost near the gym during the recent storm (it is private property from Mount to West Highland even though the borough mows)
 - Need an exact wetland mitigation border (AC will look online), and to review the South Avenue Park plans
- b. Species List: BT started working on one and shared a printout to review, we will need to add to it (note thriving trees within the borough), FG will make it into a PDF w/ links when finalized
- c. Ordinance update –
 - i. This was about to be rolled out to council on Thursday 08/06 after AC, BT, and JG spent more time on it, but that was halted because there were concerns that borough administrator didn't have time to review and comment
 - ii. VC may have more comments coming but most are in, once we address those comments and re-send to council and introduce it, the council will have two weeks to make changes, and after that there will be a public hearing and vote
 - iii. We will reintroduce it in September (09/12 or 09/26) to go to public hearing at the following meeting
 - iv. General feedback is: Do we have the right to go into people's yards to tell them what they can and can't do? Sticker shock at the prices of replacement trees, which can add up especially when considering the high prices of tree removal
 - VC paraphrasing other readers/commentators: We have to be cognizant of costs and consider the plan the best for the town; in theory this does make sense, but is the cost too much (council members are also concerned about electability)



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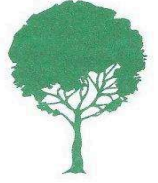


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- VC suggested reading this [NYTimes article](#) about a tree removal ordinance and litigation in Westchester; we need to limit the borough's exposure to litigation
 - VC will pressure Sarah Fitzpatrick to make sure she is clear on what backyard access means: Access for diseased trees is a Department of Agriculture demand in terms of pests, invasives; we can look into some negotiating basis/sliding scale pricing that can relate to market rate nursery stock; reminder that you don't have to replace a mature tree with an equally sized, mature tree; reminder that if you take a tree down and don't want to plant a new one in the same place, you can plant the tree elsewhere on the property or pay into a town fund to plant trees elsewhere, it can be a combination of planting and fees, you can buy and plant your own trees – it needs to be a bit interpretive
 - The key is to support a net zero loss of trees
 - Who will be inspecting/confirming plantings? Who is measuring the tree that is being removed?
 - There will be an updated tree removal application
 - There was a call scheduled for Friday (08/16) to address comments
- d. Community Forestry Plan: BT corresponded with Rich W who did second to last plan but never heard back when he provided timelines; Paul Cowie didn't get back to BT, time to count him out even though he did a good job at the last one and it would be easy to update
6. New Business –
- a. Clear Day Thunder, Rescuing the American Chestnut, film screening at the library
 - i. They can show it on a Saturday, possibly 09/28
 - ii. Who is anyone is interested to attend/be available?
 - iii. This would likely be a digital download, \$10 purchase from the American Chestnut Society
 - iv. BT motions to move forward with screening, BS seconds, all in favor
 - b. 14 East Garfield, Masonic Temple property: It has been purchased, possibly by Kalian (developer) who wants to divide it into five lots
 - i. There are many large plane trees on this lot so we need ordinance approved so the developers will pay for removed trees
 - c. First Avenue street trees: BS will send AC photos/locations of trees that went down in storm and others that were already missing (including near Atlantic House, Copper Canyon, the bagel store, the dermatologist, and otherwise, 4+ trees)
 - i. All will keep eyes out for additional spots
7. Public comment



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8. Adjournment: BS made a motion to adjourn the meeting; AC seconded the motion; all voted in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:57pm; the next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 7pm

Items not always taken in order