



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
September 11, 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, James Murphy (late arrival) (council liaisons)
 - b. Not present: Ed Kenney, Laura Redman
 - c. LR will be announced as a commission member at the 09/12 city council meeting; JG invited another potential member meeting to an upcoming meeting
2. Minutes – BS motions to approve July and August meeting minutes; JG seconds; all in favor
 - a. FG will resend corrected July/August minutes for BT to upload
3. Correspondence –
 - a. Legal letter about potential lawsuit regarding a fall on the Henry Hudson trail, copied to other borough/county/state entities as well, it does not pertain to us
 - b. Pamphlet for the 99th annual conference for NJSTC, happening in Atlantic City, October 17-18, core accreditation trainings will happen there but should happen online again in the future, AHSTC pays fees for anyone who takes these trainings
 - c. Removals requests: 2 with no reasons; multiple diseased/damaged/dead trees, including a great example with a site plan/photos
4. Treasurer's Report – no activity, have not received new fiscal year funding yet, VC will check on this
 - a. \$11,973.99 is both the opening and closing balance
 - b. BT motions to approve; JG seconds; all in favor
5. Old Business –
 - a. Regarding planting requests, 15 have come in in total, we will potentially honor additional requests that come in and will confirm a cut off date, AC has remade the request form on letterhead with a space for resident to sketch layout/plan; we have a budget of about \$20K
 - i. Fernbrook Nursery (as suggested by the borough arborist, Sherry) offers a list of selected trees that they grow onsite, the price include tree and installation for \$385, which is a significant reduction over previous year's costs
 1. Fairhaven, Manasquan, and Point Pleasant Beach use this service
 2. Species are limited and several are not native but the nursery grows and cares for these trees from bare root and they are dug out in real time; are



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- there different species available for spring installation but hot weather is a concern
3. Trees are guaranteed for one year
 4. Some of the trees on their list are native to the Southeast; we might need to look into trees that are zoned for below us/native to southern areas so these trees can survive hotter temperatures (Princeton University is now selecting new trees from the Virginia/Maryland area); note that our newer native dogwoods in town that don't seem to be doing well
- ii. We need to select narrower/smaller trees/shrubs for First Avenue (the snow goose cherry and the dogwood on the list might be a good fit here) that can work under wires; there are 7-8 spots plus replacing the shrub by the Thai restaurant
 1. These spots will need fresh soil/amending; consider little fences/gates for each tree; select trees that can handle dogs (planters are not our committee)
 2. Some spots are currently tripping hazards
 3. AC spoke with Lori about First Avenue and creating an overarching planting/amending a plan
 - a. Maybe we can get a grant? Replace sickly trees, new soil, expand tree plots by removing some bricks
 - b. This work would be hired out, it can be called the "First Avenue Capital Improvement/Beautification/Greening Plan"
 - iii. We will try Fernbrook this year (and not necessarily use them again the next year)
 - iv. AC will email people on the planting list to start checking sites, etc.
 - v. Ask your neighbors if they want a tree, BS will talk to neighbors including owners of the owl tree that came down
- b. Veteran's Park oak trees on the side streets (the trees on First Avenue will probably have to come out next year): It will be difficult to access upper/affected branches on those trees to be sent to Rutgers for testing, AC is asking Lori about having DPW get up there to get a cuttings, JM will also speak to DPW
 - i. We need to budget to treat these trees and/or removing them in a few years
 - ii. Should we plan to redo the park entirely or replace haphazardly, as needed
 - c. Ordinance, there will be a public workshop (four minutes with AC and Sarah Fitzpatrick, borough attorney) speaking/answering questions about the ordinance from the public on 09/13
 - i. AC talked to Brian Doherty about timelines – this pushes the introduction back two weeks (to 09/27) but will hopefully help avoid additional delays around public comments and the council not approving the ordinance, changes can be made in real time between the public workshop and the meeting in two weeks



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- ii. The public workshop is on the agenda
 - iii. It is rare that the public gets too wound up, VC is unconcerned
 - iv. No-one paying attention should be surprised by the ordinance, similar ordinances are in the news, and every city in NJ is doing this because they legally have to, VC has other “more draconian” ordinances printed out for reference
 - v. We need to remember that this is a living document that will be adapted over time, it can be edited/adjusted
 - vi. Potential approval at the 10/10 meeting
- d. 09/28 Film Screening of Clear Day Thunder (about the American chestnut tree)
- i. The library has all the correct information and will put together a flyer
 - ii. Otherwise, we can promote with screenshots from organization's site
 - iii. Are we serving refreshments? We could serve chestnuts!
- e. Community Forestry Plan -- BT got a Richview Consulting estimate, they did it for the 2015-2020 plan
6. Public comment
7. Adjournment: BS motions to adjourn the meeting; AC seconds; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:57pm; the next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 7pm

Items not always taken in order