

Metuchen Shade Tree Commission—Meeting Minutes—June 6, 2023

Attending: Bettina Caluori, Jeremy Campbell, Kun-han Lee, Rebecca Sabreen, Ken Sammond, Dorothy Giamboi (Council Member)

Guest: Brian Lewis, Public Works Superintendent

Meeting called to order at 7:38 p.m.

Minutes approved.

Report from Brian Lewis

Spring planting of trees completed with no complaints.

Planting at Edgar School

10 trees to be removed and 24 to be planted. 12 Lindens and 12 Maples can be planted vs. 8 Maple, 8 Linden, 8 Black Gum (a variety that does not produce the annoying seed pods).

Ken Sammond made a motion to approve the latter mix of trees, and Rebecca Sabreen seconded. It was approved unanimously.

Deficiency of Four Trees near new Manasquan Bank

Jeremy Campbell communicated that Zoning Officer Chris Cosenza informed him that the new Manasquan Bank is missing 4 trees at its redeveloped site. It was noted that the sidewalk in front of the bank (where the missing trees seem to belong) has been paved already. Placement near the bank itself is preferred.

Dorothy Giamboi announced that Highland Ave. developers are contributing approximately 30k to the Metuchen Tree Bank.

Public Works and Shade Tree Commission

Brian Lewis and STC members discussed how they can work together.

- Sucker management: The STC can help with this. For example, sycamores on South Main have suckers. If volunteers clip them off and leave piles, Brian Lewis's team will pick them up.
- The STC could create a list of dead or dangerous trees for the town to address.
- Extended discussion about allée of trees on Amboy Ave.
- Amboy Ave. can be approached in sections. In late winter, remove a tree. In spring, replace.

- The STC can help to rank the worst trees on Amboy Ave.
- Trees on Amboy should be planted at different times so they don't fail at the same time.
- Discussion of varieties to plant on Amboy: Ken Sammond noted that London Planes grow around power lines and are still the best choice. Jeremy Campbell noted that Hornbeams are wide but not tall. Brian Lewis suggested Hedge Maples are slow growing and could be appropriate.
- Counting trees on Amboy could use our own digital tree inventory (not currently accessible—needs to be addressed) plus visual inspection of Amboy trees. STC can help with this inspection.
- Brian Lewis noted that the first step is the tree inventory on Amboy Ave; after that, we can strategize/plan the intervals of planting.
- Bettina Caluori offered that a “manual” visual inventory of Amboy trees by STC should include pictures linked to location notes.
- Ken Sammond emphasized that Mayfield Street needs trees.
- Other concerns: Weedwhackers used by Borough maintenance harm roots of trees. Longer term, will trees in Metuchen Plaza grow into the grates that encircle them?

Goal: Find the worst trees on Amboy to be addressed this fall.

Farmer's Market Date

STC will have a table on August 12, 2023.

Next Meeting

August 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Dorothy Rasmussen motioned to adjourn; Rebecca Sabreen seconded.