

Metuchen Shade Tree Commission – Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2023

Commissioners: Jeremy Campbell, Ken Sammond, Bettina Caluori, Kunhan Lee, Rebecca Sabreen.

No one from the public attended.

Jeremy called meeting to order at 7:40.

Approval of Minutes.

Review of minutes. One change made to finish an incomplete sentence.

Kunhan made a motion to accept the minutes. Ken seconded. All agreed.

Arbor Day

Jeremy asked for an update on Arbor Day

Ken contacted Brian Lewis from DPW and Monica Tramontin, a warden at St. Luke's church. All is set. An old stump ground and the congregation is ready. The planting will be done on April 28 at 3:30 pm. Boy Scouts will attend and help out.

Library Grounds

Jeremy asked for an update on library grounds

Ken stated that six trees were planted along with six shrubs.

Farmers Market

Jeremy – Farmer's market? Dates?

Rebecca: What do we do there?

Jeremy stated that we provide information to the general public.

NJ Core training

Jeremy: We are accredited still and a lot of CORE trained people. He stated that the Shade Tree federation conference offers CORE training.

Budgets, Tree Planting, and Planning

There was general conversation about the addition of traffic calming features on South Main Street, and consideration that we should time our project to replace the allées on Main Street to suit the project being done by the NJDOT

Kunhan asked if the allée extends all the way down South Main?

Jeremy stated that we should get Melissa in here. It is not an emergency, but we need to know how better how things work with the borough. For example, how can we work with the pedestrian safety

grant? The borough received a big grant – we have to replace those trees that we had to cut down for safety reasons.

There was further conversation on how we will do research on allées.

Ken suggested that we create a plan for their end of life replacement.

Kunhan asked how we get the budget increased.

Ken stated that we have to know the budget first of all. We are not given a number to work with.

Bettina argued that we need awareness in the sense that citizens have an impact on local government. We need to research what other towns have done and follow their lead.

Jeremy stated that we take flack and complaints but offer little benefit.

Kunhan stated that we need to know the budget so we can plant much larger trees on a larger scale.

Jeremy summed up that a) we need to do the research about budgeting; b) we need to get Melissa and Brian in here. And we have to consider where we can get the funding from.

Kunhan stated that he had an understanding that we used to have larger plantings, perhaps sixty, and that we should plan better.

Jeremy stated that we used to do plans.

Kunhan stated that we need a new tree inventory. We are going to need an inventory and budget for our updated forestry plan.

Ken suggested that we open dialogue with Brian Lewis by inviting him to arbor day planting.

Bettina brought up our concern about Metuchen's allées, and our planting strip challenges, and our concerns with other kinds of trees under power lines. If a tree is taken down under power lines, can it not be replaced? How can we change that attitude? Can we just plant them in the public ROW.

Ken recommended that we use the i-Tree application offered by the USDA and Bettina agreed.

Ken said he would reach out to Brian Lewis to attend the Arbor Tree planting.

Bettina made a move to adjourn. Jeremy seconded. All agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32.