



Meeting Date: September 9, 2020; 7 – 9 PM

Present: George Heflich, Shana Greenblatt Janoff, Joanne Letson, Lauren Egbert, David Altemose, John Weber (liaison), Al Gubitosi (liaison), David Brown (B.A.)

A. Sunshine Laws, Etc.

Reviewed and discussed rules and regulations for all borough commission members: do not deliberate outside of public meetings; cannot communicate on issues outside meetings in member groups greater than 2 (3 or more is a quorum); do not deliberate on emails; do not “reply all” to emails – communication may be limited to one other commission member (may bcc) group as a way to have direct one-on-one discussion, etc.

There is much work ahead for the commission to get going (creating a 5-year plan, going forward with an RFP in hiring a Tree Expert, permit applications, etc.). We were advised by David (BA) that working groups are limited to 2 people maximum when moving forward in between public meetings.

Follow up (per John and Greg, Borough attorney:) members may review/edit internal organizing documents in Google docs. (or other platform) so long as it's not used to take votes or other action(s) that are supposed to be public. They cannot substitute for meetings.

B. Election of Officers

It was recommended that the role of Vice Chair and a Treasurer be added to ordinance.

Note: Per David, Sandy (CFO) and David (BA) will serve as point of contact for treasury funds until possible treasurer and Trust is established.

Chairperson: George Heflich was nominated by Joanne as Shade Tree Ordinance Chairperson; Shana seconded. All “ayes” – no abstain.

- **Alternates:** Original “alternates” have been moved up to fill the vacancy of primary Commission members. Currently there are 2 vacant alternate positions which need to be filled.
 - Al suggested Cynthia Meyer (Liz Hernandez’s mother) for consideration as an alternate member. **John Weber will reach out to her.**
- **Council Liaisons:** John Weber and Al Gubitosi to both serve as liaisons from the Council. **Add to Resolution to include both councilmen.**

Secretary: Lauren Egbert was nominated by Shana as Secretary. Lauren declined.

Shana Greenblatt Janoff was nominated by Lauren; Joanne seconded. (Note: Shana declined a number of times but there appeared no other individuals to be nominated. Shana indicated that she was interested in serving as a vice chair for the commission, and until a vice chair is added to commission ordinance, she accepted nomination.). All “ayes” – no abstain.

John ran the remainder of the meeting.

- Shana shared a flow chart of suggested roles and responsibility within Commission, adding that every member will be required to be invested. This will be revisited at next meeting. Al suggested that a liaison to Police be included in scope.



C. RFP to Hire Tree Expert

- **David to share a 4-6-page Draft RFP for Tree Expert**, to discuss at next meeting.
- There is no current budget assigned to Commission. Based on asset of current fund, a “Transfer” will be made in November, which will be available until the end of 2020 – based on approval by Mayor/Council at 1st November meeting.
- Per David, the funds (\$) will dictate scope. In January, the Commission may present a proposed financial budget based on Tree Expert and other needs for Commission. It was discussed that the determination of funds should be made based on need/scope, etc. and not the other way around.
- Shana asked if Borough Code Enforcement may be used for enforcement of ordinance. Discussion ensued. Lauren pointed out the vital importance for Tree Expert to provide expertise, and agreement amongst the group, but to consider having Code provide actual enforcement, as with other Borough ordinances. Have help from DPW to manage appropriate physical support.
David to review ordinance to determine how enforcement is written and if it specifically assigns task to Tree Expert and whether it needs amendment or consideration.
- Commission to assess scope/need/time for Tree Expert; perhaps distill the expertise around us (internal resources) if ordinance is silent on who serves enforcement role.
- It was suggested to change the terminology/definition of Tree Expert and distinguish expertise and assessment from enforcement.
- Per David, the Borough will provide funds to cover conference registration costs (deemed appropriate for member training towards certification) if they take place prior to budget allocation. Contact David Brown (BA) for funding prior to November 2020.
- Protocol prior to Tree Expert: Until such time as the Commission has a Tree Expert in place, it is okay to ask the DPW to trim trees in planning strip. Per David, this has to fall on DPW and Code Enforcement. The Commission is not currently covered for insurance liability until there is a Tree Expert and the Commission has proper certification. There was also discussion about protocol in handling applications for tree removal on personal property and how to enforce without a Tree Expert in place. **David & John to have a “robust” conversation with DPW about this.**
- **Add Shade Tree Commission to Borough website, and portal for posting meetings and agendas. Add commission members.**
- **Per David Brown, Katie Muscillo (kmuscillo@bradleybeachnj.gov) has drafted a preliminary Shade Tree “Permit Application.” Will share with commission.**



- Marketing/Publicity: discussion ensued as to the best ways to communicate and educate on the Shade Tree Commission: newspaper, website (need a prominent place on website to launch Shade Tree); social media; insert in tax bill; borough calendar; reverse 911 email/phone - ??;

D. Tree Ordinance – FAQ Draft

- Lauren prepared a draft of the Shade Tree Removal Permit Application Process FAQs.
- Shana presented a Flow chart for Tree Removal.
- It was discussed that both of these be fleshed out and perhaps flow charts used for publicity and educating community.
- It was suggested that there needs to be coordination with Borough departments (DPW, Code, Police, etc.) and Ordinance needs to be communicated with these entities, along with the community.

E. Meeting Schedule

- Consider best day of week. Wednesdays may be a good meeting day.
- Two meetings/month per ordinance: 1st & 3rd; 2nd & 4th?
- David Brown will participate in the next few meetings.
- **John will send a “Doodle” poll so everyone can chime in on best days for meetings.**
- Discussion of whether Secretary will have own Zoom account for virtual meetings or a “corporate” level account for the Borough. David was uncertain as to whether we can do this. **David to look into possibility of Zoom account for all users (may be more cost effective).**
- Meeting Schedule and Meeting Minutes should be sent to Michelle Whille (and cc: David) for posting.
- Meeting Minutes must be approved at next Commission meeting before posting.
- Secretary to provide Meeting Minutes to fellow Commission for review a minimum of 2 days prior to next commission meeting.

Other Business

- Do we wait until we are squared away as an operating commission (with a Tree Expert, funding, Community Forestry Plan, publicity and community education) to enact Shade Tree Ordinance or do we activate now? As Commission has been approved, are we under obligation to enforce?
- It was discussed that it is important to present protocol to public, refine FAQs and flow charts and finalize permit draft before effectively launching Ordinance.
- Borough does not yet have live online permit submission or electronic fee receipt, which will ultimately become protocol for Borough Permit Process.
- Suggested that the Commission take a look at other Master Plans in an effort to create our own Community Forestry Plan. Take a look at Spring Lake’s Master plan, among others. **John will look to see if the old Master Plan is accessible for review.** He mentioned that Aspen Tree Service worked with the former BB Shade Tree Commission. It was discussed to access our own historical ordinances (Lauren mentioned the Ordinance in place in 2007 where she recalled a fee



for removal). An historical context for a fee schedule associated with Shade Tree may be useful for public information and presenting current ordinance.

- **Trust:** Al Gubitosi suggested that we establish a Shade Tree Trust at this point. Per David, a Trust already exists; it needs to be re-activated. ***David to check with Sandy if Trust is active, and if not, will create.***

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm. Motion to close by George; seconded by Shana.

Respectfully submitted:
Shana Greenblatt Janoff