

Minutes of the BBSTC - October 19th, 2022

1. Call to Order at 7:10 pm

2. Roll Call

- George Heflich - Present
- Larry Bagwell - Present
- Jane DeNoble - Present
- Tom Gavin - Present
- Laurie Bagley - Present
- Nick Kosarych- Absent
- Anne Gubitosi- Absent

3. Ratification of Minutes of 10-5-22

T. Gavin made Motioned and Seconded –
Unanimously Carried

4. Applications

- New:

22-023 214 Park Place

216 Park Place will remove the tree.

G. Heflich confirmed with owner that this is legit application. States Tree is close to neighbor's house and may be a danger.

J. DeNoble - Tree is old - has rot - and is toxic to animals and other trees. Neighbor would consider an "Honor Me" tree.

Motion made by Jane DeNoble to approve with no replacements, seconded and unanimously carried.

- 22-024 2 Atlantic Ave.

Two Orange-Flagged Trees.

Motion made by T. Gavin, seconded and unanimously carried. No replacements needed.

5. Events

- Fall Planting- October 8th
 - Success! Honor Me tree recipients very pleased. J. DeNoble was major contributor to success. Planted 28 trees in total. DPW did “Amazing job” - dug holes and “were everywhere, helping put each tree into its designated spot”.
 - L. Bagley noted that 606 Fletcher Lake resident can’t water the tree. J. DeNoble followed up.
 - Watering Bag Removal - DeNoble is tracking. Will likely remove in November.
 - Watering Bag Emails L. Bagley sent.
 - Waivers - L. Bagwell will get Forms to G Heflich who must submit to the BA.

- Improvements
 - L. Bagley suggested use Google Forms or Customer Excel spreadsheet.
 - Have teams of two assigned to each tree.
 - L. Bagwell suggests changing the Wishing Tree form to include ability for donor to volunteer

6. Calendar

- Next meeting will be November 2nd
 - ZOOM - Heflich will check with Larry and Nick to assure Zoom is ok
 - Mailbox - J. DeNoble will check mail frequently.
- Following meeting will be December 7th

9. Commission Comments

- G. Heflich raised concerns about complaints received by the Shade Tree Commission related to the notices sent out for “Red-Flagged” trees. Evidently a Notice of Violation was sent to residents with the Commission as the person who sent it. This was in violation of the ordinance. The Administration has never contacted us

about this.

- L. Bagwell asked about negative Social Media posts blaming Shade Tree Commission. Heflich read aloud a post from Councilman Tim Sexsmith. Bagwell suggests Sexsmith should repost and correct his statement. Was this run through the BA and Social Media review person? Heflich does not know.
- T. Gavin stated that Sexsmith posted on his political site - not the Borough's STC site. Tree removal is a significant hit. Not sure that the letter was in the Borough's best interest.
- G. Heflich finds this "accusation" by Councilman Sexsmith very offensive and wrong. Stated that Councilman Sexsmith knows that his statements were not accurate as he was at the meeting they were discussed.
- L. Bagley also expressed concern. Asked if Code drafted the letter. Recommends that STC contact the BA to make sure this does not happen again. L. Bagley stated that Weber's reply to the Sexsmith post was well stated in defending the Shade Tree Commission.
- T. Gavin -passed along recommendation from neighbor - perhaps attach INSTRUCTIONS to the watering bags. Maybe attach a ziplock bag to the watering bag with instructions inside? L. Bagley said L. Bagley sent instruction emails to all. Still might consider adding instructions - e.g. how often to fill bag?

10. Liaison Comments- J. Weber not in attendance.

11. Public Comments- None.

12. Close: 8:05 pm

Recently, numerous borough residents and property owners, including me, received a notice of violation in the mail. The notice sent at the behest of unelected and unaccountable members of the Shade Tree Commission, directs me to spend thousands of my hard earned dollars to remove a tree from my planting strip that they have deemed as, "In need of removal." Per the notice, if I fail to remove the tree in a timely fashion, the borough can and will issue me a summons, and take me to court.

How is it that unelected members of a borough commission of busybodies, with no written policies or procedures other than an ordinance establishing the commission, can direct taxpayers how to spend their money? The commission was given these sweeping powers as a result of a poorly crafted ordinance written by Councilmen Gubitosi and Weber and is a perfect example of why members of the governing body should leave crafting ordinances to the professionals.

To be fair, the Shade tree Commission has done a great deal of good in the last few years planting trees and conducting the tree inventory. They like to say they "just want to plant trees." But that is where their unilateral power should end. The street trees

identified as deficient by the inventory undoubtedly require attention, and in many cases removal. But once identified, recommendations should have been made to the mayor and council to decide the next steps.

Since all the deficient trees identified are in the planting strips and are a benefit to all residents and visitors, as a sitting member of council, I am going to push the administration to have DPW develop a cost effective plan to address the identified trees. Going forward if I am reelected, I pledge to revise the Shade Tree ordinance to rein in the commission members' ability to spend your money.