

**TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG**  
**SHADE TREE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING AGENDA**

**7:00 pm**

June 6, 2024

The June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Robyn George. A moment of silence was offered followed by the Oath of Allegiance.

Chairwoman George stated “Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided indicating the time and place of the meeting in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 by advertising a Notice in The Star Ledger and The Express – Times and by posting a copy on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building”.

Present: Chairwoman Robyn George, Vice-Chair Gregory Blackwood, Member Ben George

**Old Business:**

1. Approval of February 1, 2024 and April 4, 2024.

Motion to approve by: Member Blackwood

Seconded by: Chairwoman George

AYES: All in Favor

NAYS: None

**New Business:**

**DPW Activity**

Chairwoman Robyn George talks about doing a DPW activity report each month for the members. She receives calls and emails and would like it documented and on the record.

**2024 Budget**

Member Ben George asks to talk about the 2024 Budget. Chairwoman Robyn George states we normally go in order, but we can talk about item #2 - 2024 budget. Chairwoman Robyn George

referred to Item No. 2 and noted to Secretary Dilts saying she provided us with an expense report.

Chairwoman Robyn George states it looks like we have paid our membership of \$100.00 dues for the Shade Tree Federation membership. We have the expense to advertise our calendar with the Express-Times and Start Ledger. If we are to change a meeting, we need to advertise that too. We have \$1,000 education allocated for the Shade Tree Federation conference in October that's to cover registration fees for that. We have \$2,750 misc. budget. That misc. budget will cover, for example, the Community Day involvement and any other misc. costs that we have; \$150 membership dues which we have already paid out \$100.00. Then there is a note here at the bottom says we have \$15,000 DPW tree maintenance/budget (planting, pruning, and clean up.) Brian seems to do most of the removal. Most of the tree removal comes out of the DPW budget.

Next, year we need to be on time with our budget. Member Ben George states that our budget for the tree budget is less this year. Last year we were at \$18,000. Chairwoman Robyn George states with all the extra memberships, misc. education fees, added up, equals \$18,000. This year we don't have to spend any money for Community Day.

### **Community Day**

Chairwoman Robyn George asks when is Community Day. Secretary Dilts responds August 24, 2024. We always participate in Community Day. It's our obligation as the Shade Tree Commission to have a table there. Chairwoman Robyn George states this year, I have done all the Storm Water training. Rutgers is going to be offering community education programs for rain gardens. That's something I'm really passionate about getting the community aware of building a rain garden. There are even grants available to help the residents with putting a rain garden in. Vice-Chair Gregory Blackwood asked for Chairwoman Robyn George to explain in a nutshell how rain gardens work. Instead of planting grass you can put in a storm garden to collect the water so all the water doesn't flow into the storm drains. The state would like to reduce the amount of rain that gets to the storm drains and ends up down the river. There was a planted rain garden at the Lopatcong Middle School in the middle of the circle. Unfortunately, when the students that want to take care of the rain garden move onto a different school the next set of students don't want to take care of it and then it becomes nonexistent. There is a rain garden at the park. It's where the garbage containers go on the side of the pool. They have done a study of the town to show where we should put a rain garden. One of the places Rutgers said to put a rain garden was at the firehouse on Stryker's Road.

We don't have Kayla anymore, so I have been reaching out to Council President Jim Palitto and going to rec. meetings.

### **Tree Planting**

Chairwoman Robyn George states next item is tree planting. We have taken down a lot of trees due to storms and the fact that trees are dying. We haven't amended the ordinance as yet, but trees do need to be replaced when they are taken down. We found a wholesale nursery; Northern Nursery and we have an account. On N. Second Street, four trees came down; one tree was

replaced instead of four. There is going to be a memorial tree planted in the circle for Susan Smith on Raliegh Court. Chairwoman Robyn George states that the money will come off the purchase order so we don't buy it. We received an estimate from Sunshine to remove the bushes and plant the trees. Chairwoman George noted the other trees that would be planted as well as their location. The approval for planting cost of \$3,500 and to purchase the trees and plants for \$2,200. Which includes delivery of the trees and plants comes to just under \$6,000.

Comment from audience member: Betsy Johnson followed up that she lives in Delaware Park. She was unaware that the Shade Tree Commission replaced trees that have fallen down in her community. It was stated that the policy was put into place 5 to 8 years ago.

If you don't replace the tree yourself, you have to fund the replacement of the tree somewhere else. Based on prices, it will cost the town \$300 to purchase a tree and \$400 to plant a new tree. The average cost needs to be put into the tree budget. Changes to the Ordinance will follow the state model. At the next meeting we will take a look at it and review it then approve to send it to Adam for approval.

Motion by Member George, seconded by Vice-Chair Blackwood to approve the tree planting.

Roll Call: Member George, Vice-Chair Blackwood, and Chairwoman George

### **May Tree Activity**

- One Black Locus on N. Second Street
- Two Norway Maple on Prospect
- One on Jade Lane Basin
- Two on Powderhorn
- Four trees in Delaware Park

Three Maples need to be replaced on S. Second Street. The trees are dying due to the brick raised wall around the trees. Ivy has grown up and they were told to reach out to Sunshine to be able to save the trees.

Certified tree expert to go out. We don't want to spend money to prune trees that are already dying.

Marshall Silva 410 Cromwell – The tree is very close to the house. Remove the tree.

Little parcel plot tax map?

The new ordinance has an exception if it's dead or dying or presents a risk it doesn't need to be replaced.

Shade Tree Commission planted Red Oak Saplings delayed Arbor Day planting. 45 saplings were planted in the forest by middle school. Black Willow sapling was planted behind Jade Lane in the storm basin, next to the creek.

## **Community Day**

Waiting for confirmation on rain garden from Rutgers. We have plenty of supplies left over from last year. (bubble bottles) They are stored in Chairwoman Robyn George's basement.

The more we do it the more people will become aware that the Shade Tree Commission replaces trees that are taken down. There are webinars and training classes to attend. Shade Tree Commission holds a conference every year. Chairwoman Robyn George will be attending this year in Atlantic City. It's incredibly informative two-day workshop.

We come together once a month for this meeting. We are not allowed to meet outside of this meeting as it would violate the laws; Sunshine laws but we do activities like planting trees. We are in dire need of members. There is an open invitation to participate with us no obligation do as much or as little. The door is always open.

## **Comment**

Betsy Johnson suggested the Boy Scouts participate. Chairwoman Robyn George noted they do participate. I'm going to reach out to Mr. Kish. It was too late to reach out this year. Jade Lane stormwater basin would be a great way for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Girl Scouts to help out.

## **NO July Meeting**

Chairwoman Robyn George - July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting we didn't look closely at the calendar. Can we reschedule the meeting or is it too expensive to reschedule?

Secretary Dilts – It's too expensive. She also stated that if a meeting falls on a holiday, typically the meeting will be held on the next day.

Chairwoman Robyn George – So next year when we make our calendar, let's make sure the meeting days don't land on a holiday.

I'll communicate to everyone about the rain garden and send out the ordinance. We will not be able to discuss the ordinance until the August meeting. By the August meeting you will have a new secretary.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by: Member George Seconded by: Chairwoman George

AYES: All in favor

NAYS: none

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Bisci  
Secretary

## **Adjournment**

