

**WESTWOOD SHADE TREE COMMITTEE**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2023 –6:30PM**

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by the Chairman Dan Zambrano at 6:34pm
2. **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan Zambrano, Fred Rella, Beth Staples, Michael Murtaugh, Councilwoman Erin Collins, new member Christine Blaney – Absent: Casey Christopher
3. **APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES:** The minutes of December 13, 2022 were approved.
4. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER:** Christine Blaney introduced herself. She had formerly been a member of the Borough's Green Team and works for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection.
5. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**
  - a. **NJUCF CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS** – Dan completed 7 CEUs which meets our NJUCF requirement for 2023.
  - b. **ARBOR DAY** – Arbor Day is the last Friday in April. We usually celebrate the next day on Saturday. It was decided to hold a weeklong celebration. Councilwoman Collins reported that the Rainbow Girls would like to sponsor a shade tree and WSTC members are invited to their meeting on April 25 at 6pm at the Masonic Temple on Kinderkamack Road. The tree is to be planted in the front yard to tie in with our new ordinance allowing Borough trees to be planted on the homeowner's side of the sidewalk within the Borough's 10' easement. Discussion of asking recreation associations to sponsor a tree(s) in their respective parks. Goal is for 5 days of planting leading up to the Saturday final celebration. The order of planting at the parks will be Hegeman, Nugent, Overbrook, Voorhees, and Meadowbrook Field. The planting events will be publicized on social media and in the local newspapers. Fred will reach out to Bartlett Tree Experts for saplings to donate, and Christine will approach the NJDEP Forestry Service about the availability of saplings.
  - c. **WSTC OPERATIONS PLAN** – The new two-page Operations Plan was reviewed, edited, and amended by the Committee. The new Version 1 was approved. A copy will be sent to Rick Woods at the DPW requesting his comments, edits, and approval. Councilwoman Collins will then present it to the Mayor and Council. Rick's revisions are included in the Version 2 attached.
  - d. **TREE REMOVAL** – There was discussion of the historic tree that was removed from the property at the corner of Dean and Benson. All the trees on the property were removed. Rick and Armand were sent to the site. Councilwoman Collins will check with Armand and report on the actions taken.
  - e. **BOROUGH ARBORIST** – Discussion of the need for a town arborist. Currently, the Borough is without one.
  - f. **COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN STEWARDSHIP PLAN** – Beth will update the Borough's most recent Stewardship Plan for dates, etc. Dan will email her a full copy of the Borough's last accepted plan. WSTC will then work on the Implementation Schedule goals this year. It will cover 1/1/23 – 12/31/27.
  - g. **FUTURE MEETING DATES** – Remaining meeting dates for 2023 will be: 2/28, 3/14, 4/11, 5/9, 6/20/, 7/11, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, and 12/12. All meetings will begin at 7pm and there will be no meeting in August.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:23pm

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 7:00pm

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. Arbor Day Saplings – Fred and Christine**
- 2. Operations Plan – Erin to present to Mayor and Council**
- 3. Community Forestry Program goals – full committee**
- 4. Stewardship Plan – Dan, Beth, and Erin**
- 5. Increased budget request – Erin**
- 6. Tree Removal form – waiting on Borough**
- 7. Tree Sponsorship Program – waiting until Tree Removal form is finalized and operational**
- 8. Procedure for notification of Building Department tree removal authorizations – Erin**
- 9. Salem Oak – members will continue to grow saplings as their homes**
- 10. Sidewalk Replacement Plan – Beth**

# WESTWOOD SHADE TREE COMMITTEE 2023-2024 OPERATIONS PLAN

## PURPOSE & INTENT OF OPERATIONS PLAN:

The Westwood Shade Tree Advisory Committee (WSTC) was created to provide guidance on the planting, maintenance, education, and preservation of all Borough trees. Our mission is to plant as many new trees as possible within the Borough, while maintaining and expanding the Borough’s tree canopy, and to educate the community on the value and importance of trees.

## PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of this Operations Plan are supported in existing Borough policies and plans as well as by Westwood residents.

- **Accessibility and Health:** To provide a safe, accessible, and inviting walking environment, following universal design principles.
- **Environment:** To protect and expand a healthy urban forest.
- **Efficiency:** To preserve existing assets— both street trees and sidewalks—and use resources wisely.

These goals will be met by achieving the following objectives.

- Acquire requisite CEU units annually for NJUCF accreditation and complete all necessary NJUCF application documentation including an annual Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Retain healthy, mature, and appropriately sited trees whenever possible, while ensuring mobility.
- Increase the urban canopy by planting new Borough trees with a beginning goal of 1:1 ratio (dependent on DPW labor capacity and time availability) – the goal of one new Borough tree planted for every Borough tree removed. The loss of any shade tree is a loss to the entire community and, as such, should be avoided except when removal is necessary for reasons of safety, public necessity, or unavoidable development.
- Provide residents with options for the repair of sidewalks damaged by street trees with sustainable, innovative solutions to preserve trees where feasible.
- Explore strategies that enhance neighborhood aesthetic, reduce lifecycle costs, and allow sidewalks and substantial trees to coexist.
- Assess the appropriateness of street trees based on established criteria, including species, location, planting space, maintenance, past and current conflicts, and proximity to public and private structures and infrastructure.
- Work with the Borough’s Department of Public Works (DPW) to schedule tree pruning and removal (when no other practicable alternatives exist) in phases to enable continued canopy coverage.
- Communicate to property owners the importance of proper tree maintenance and encourage the planting of Borough trees within the 10’ easement on the property owners’ side of the sidewalk.

## SUGGESTED TREE LIST

The WSTC recommends that all new Borough trees be selected with the approval of the WSTC in coordination with the Westwood Department of Public Works, and be from the diverse varieties noted in the latest *NJ Tree Foundation’s Urban Tolerant Trees* and *Utility Friendly Trees* lists. These include:

| Tall Trees      | Medium Trees         | Small Trees          |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| American Elm    | Blackgum             | Serviceberry         |
| Zelkova         | Littleleaf Linden    | Japanese Snowbell    |
| Ginko           | Freeman Maple        | American Hornbeam    |
| Pin Oak         | Sycamore Maple       | Eastern Redbud       |
| White Oak       | Red Maple            | Trident Maple        |
| Swamp White Oak | Red Horse-chestnut   | Hedge Maple          |
| Chestnut Oak    | European Hornbeam    | Amur Maple           |
| Willow Oak      | Hackberry            | American Smoketree   |
|                 | Katsura              | Winter King Hawthorn |
|                 | Yellowwood           | Persian Parrotia     |
|                 | American Hophornbeam | Japanese Lilac Tree  |

## **THE WSTC RECOMMENDS:**

- Adoption of a beginning goal of 1:1 replacement policy under which the Borough would plant one tree for each tree they remove from Borough property or the right-of-way (dependent on DPW labor capacity and time availability).
- Adoption of the industry standard tree pruning cycle of five to seven years for all street trees by 2030.
- All healthy trees determined by the Borough arborist and the DPW Superintendent requested for removal (save for emergency situations) be reported to the WSTC. Removal of dead trees does not require WSTC permission, but those removals must be reported in writing on a monthly basis in a method to be determined by the Borough Administrator for our records.
- All newly installed sidewalks adjacent to Borough trees have a layer of washed gravel under the sidewalk pavement as research has found that a washed gravel layer under the sidewalk pavement may reduce damage by tree roots. The open-graded gravel does not hold water, and the lack of soil and nutrients in the voids discourages root growth while supporting the pavement. WSTC understands this gravel is an extra cost, which is why the WSTC plans for an adoption of a sidewalk replacement program for those Borough sidewalks damaged by tree roots.
- All new trees be planted in accordance with the nationwide best practices for tree planting including the provision of certain minimum volumes of soil that are useable by the tree for root growth (e.g., the soils contain nutrients/organic matter and some degree of void space to accommodate air, water, and root growth), deer wrap, short-term maintenance (primarily watering), and regular monitoring for health.
- Coordinate all new tree plantings with existing utilities as Westwood is a developed Borough, and there are very few locations where trees could be installed without such coordination.
- Promote ways for residents to identify and manage the Spotted Lantern Fly to keep Borough populations down.
- Schedule removal of all infected Borough ash trees.
- Pruning of street trees to address visibility problems rather than removal whenever possible.
- Applying for NJUCF, NJ Tree Federation, and other such organizational grants once NJUCF accreditation is acquired.
- Continued education of WSTC members and assigned DPW personnel.
- Expansion of social media presence and community educational outreach programs to promote new tree plantings that add to our Borough's canopy.