

WESTWOOD SHADE TREE COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023 –7:00PM

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:17pm
2. **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan Zambrano, Beth Staples, Michael Murtaugh, Christine Blaney – Absent: Casey Christopher, Fred Rella, Councilwoman Erin Collins
3. **APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES:** The minutes of January 31, 2023 were approved as amended. The appended Operations Plan was also amended to reflect the suggested changes from Rick Woods, DPW Superintendent (see below).
4. **FINAL REVISIONS TO 2023-2024 WSTC OPERATIONS PLAN:**
 - a. Fred had emailed Dan expressing his concerns that the stated 1:1 goal does not increase the urban canopy at the current rate trees are being removed. Dan followed up with Rick Woods who indicated that he will try to plant as many new trees as he can. However, he could not commit to a larger number of plantings given his department’s scheduling concerns and the possibility of unforeseen emergencies. In addition, he did not want to order additional trees and then not be able to plant them before the health of the trees were affected.
 - b. The WSTCOP was revised to reflect Rick’s concerns: 1:1 tree replacement goal dependent on DPW labor capacity and time availability, not having to get WSTC approval to remove dead trees, not requiring sidewalk replacements to add stone (just recommend it), and not using Spotted Lantern Fly traps after Borough Administrator had a meeting with Bartlett Tree Experts regarding cost/effectiveness. All of these changes were approved and WSTCOP Version 2 was adopted. It will now be presented to the Mayor and Council for final adoption.
5. **ARBORIST:** It was suggested that we ask the Mayor and Council approve the hiring/training of a new Borough arborist which could possibly be part of a shared services agreement with other municipalities.
6. **ARBOR FEST PLANNING:** It was agreed to call the weeklong planting event, the “Westwood Arbor Fest Tree Planting Celebration.” It was suggested that, depending upon our budget, a handout be prepared for dissemination at each planting. Once the 2023 Arbor Day logo is revealed, it will be added to our marketing. Final approval for each park location will be determined with Rick Woods. The following initial planting schedule was agreed upon:
 - a. Tuesday, April 25 at 5pm in Hegeman Park with an additional planting with the Rainbow Girls at the Masonic Temple on Kinderkamack Road to follow at 6pm.
 - b. Wednesday, April 26 at 6pm at Nugent Park (planting will possibly be at a later time depending upon the availability of the Boy Scouts).
 - c. Thursday, April 27 at 6pm at Overbrook Park
 - d. Friday, April 28 at 6pm at Voorhees Park. Councilwoman Collins will reach out to the Voorhees family.
 - e. Saturday, April 29 at TBD at Meadowbrook Park possibly including the Baseball Association and the Scouts
7. **TREE REMOVALS AND PRUNING:**
 - a. **Removals:** Dan reported that the following hollow trees were removed by the DPW: Brookside Park, 93 Wheeler (1), 92 Wheeler (2), 71 Roosevelt Ave (1), 31 Clinton Ave (1). Dan had reached out to the Building Department to introduce himself and to ask about the trees removed from the property at the corner of Dean & Benson and was informed that the work was permitted per Construction Code Official. Dan discovered 42 private tree removal permits were issued in 2022.
 - b. **Pruning:**
 - i. Shade Tree received an email from resident of 17 Newark Ave requesting the pruning of Sycamore trees at 17 and 11 Newark Ave and claiming that branches fell and were

compromised the wires running from pole to house. This request was forwarded to Rick on the date received, February 10, 2023.

- ii. Dan reported on an emailed pruning request for 51 Lockerby Lane. The homeowner initially sent an email on January 1, 2023 requesting trees be pruned; this was forwarded to Rick. The homeowner then followed up with a recap email on February 5, 2023. There were some concerns over trees not trimmed near powerlines and possibly other removals not completed. This was forwarded to Rick and the Borough Administrator. Rick responded that the three trees in question were trimmed and elevated and did not require removal. He did not contact PSEG regarding the tree trimming near powerlines and if PSEG did not warrant trimming, there is not much else they can do. Homeowner appeared happy with the work DPW did.
- iii. Rick Woods provided Dan with a list of the trees that were recently pruned.

8. **COMMITTEE MEMBER DISCUSSION:** Casey Christopher informed Dan that due to her current work schedule she will not be able to continue her service on the board.
9. **COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN:** Beth has begun updating the Borough's last approved Community Forestry Management Plan. It was decided to review the Plan in sections with the goal of 5-10 pages or more per meeting. Updated budgetary information will be needed Councilwoman Collins.
10. **ADOPT-A-TREE:** Beth reported that the Borough's last approved Community Forestry Management Plan noted that the Borough had an Adopt-A-Tree program. Beth will check with the Borough Clerk about the particulars of the former plan and what would be required to restart the program.
11. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Action items:

Adopt-A-Tree: Beth to check with Karen about restarting the program

CFMP: Beth to email sections for committee review. Erin to obtain budget information.

New Member: Erin to report vacancy.

WSTCOP: Erin to represent final WSTCOP to Mayor and Council for adoption.

Arborist: Erin to ask Mayor and Council about a replacement or shared arborist.

Arbor Day: Continue plans for weeklong celebration.