

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION

November 17, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Chairman Patrick Carroll called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Shade Tree Commission to order at 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building. The Open Public Meetings Act was read aloud.

Name	Present	Absent
Patrick Carroll (Chrmn.)	X	
John Barton	X	
Fran Drew	X	
Colleen Truppo	X – arrived at 7:40 p.m.	
Ken Fekete	X	
Thomas Boyle		X
Christopher Jadro	X	
Dean Wilson	X	
Tony Torello	X	
Council Member Kass		X

Also present were residents Bruce Ferguson, Ron Nicola, Anne & Kristy Chmura. John Linson, the Borough Arborist, was present.

Public Comment

Bruce Ferguson, 28 Rowan Rd., brought up the survey recently done for the Emerald Ash Borer trees in the Borough. 75% of the Ash Borer trees in the Borough are on Rowan Rd. Rowan Road was named for the Rowan Ash Borer tree. Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Nicola, another resident from Rowan Rd., were very concerned about losing these neighborhood trees.

Mr. Ferguson made two requests:

- 1) Could the Shade Tree Commission authorize Mr. Linson to walk Rowan Road with some of the residents and take a closer look at the ash trees?
- 2) Can money be raised to save these particular mature trees in the neighborhood?

Chrmn. Carroll noted that this neighborhood awareness came about because 23 Rowan Rd. has two ash trees. The ash tree on that particular corner is not in good condition, and was scheduled to be removed. The second tree, as well as the other ash trees in the neighborhood, could be looked at again.

Mr. Linson stated that these Ash trees were planted on Rowan Road when the homes were constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Some of these trees have grown over the electrical wires and others are in declining condition. Mr. Linson clarified that he is not opposed to saving/treating some of the Ash trees on Rowan Rd. However, Mr. Linson pointed out that the ash trees on that street are not Rowan Ash. He explained how ash yellows affect some of the trees on Rowan Road. Unfortunately, no treatment is available for ash yellow.

Mr. Linson noted that some of the ash trees on Rowan Road are showing signs of distress. Structural disease due to extreme storms has also affected these trees.

The Commission reviewed their current budget. Ms. Truppo distributed a hand-out to the Commissioners. She reported that she and Mr. Torello had met with Tim Day, the Borough CFO, regarding the Commission's budget. Ms. Truppo and Mr. Torello had asked for \$3,000 for preventive maintenance. They asked \$1800 for professional services to allow Mr. Linson to conduct a hazardous tree survey in Borough parks and Borough properties. They also asked for a 40% increase for future tree plantings. Ms. Truppo reviewed the other expenses discussed with Mr. Day.

Chrmn. Carroll asked Mr. Linson if he would be willing to walk Rowan Road to take a closer look at the ash trees.

Mr. Torello suggested, if Mr. Linson agrees to review the trees on Rowan Rd., he could also walk down Weston Avenue. From Weston Ave. down to Coleman Ave. is heavily populated with ash trees.

Mr. Ferguson asked if there was some way Chatham Borough could find the money to save these ash trees on Rowan Road.

After further discussion, all Commissioners present voted in favor of having John Linson walk and re-review the ash trees on Weston Ave. and Rowan Road.

Chrmn. Carroll said that depending on Mr. Linson's findings, it then becomes a budget issue. The Mayor and Borough Council determine the Shade Tree Commission's budget. Tonight's visitors and Commissioners are encouraged to attend a Borough Council and speak on any additional expenses for the STC budget.

An unidentified member of the public reported that the Department of Public Works is planning to construct a large garage 150 feet from his house. This gentleman, and his neighbors, did not receive any notice of this proposed construction that will impact his neighborhood. Better notification of these types of projects would be appreciated by residents.

Returning to the budget, Ms. Truppo said there is still time to discuss the Commission budget with the Borough Council. No decisions have been finalized for 2016. Chrmn. Carroll noted that in January there will be two new Council Members. The Shade Tree Commission will have a new Council Liaison in the new year.

Mr. Linson took the names and phone numbers of Messrs. Ferguson and Nicola before they departed. He will be in touch with them about the future walks/reviews on Weston Ave. and Rowan Road.

Kristy Chmura, another member of the public, suggested the Borough have an “Adopt a Tree Program”. A resident or business can donate towards a tree in their neighborhood, thus lessening expenses on the Commission’s budget. Ms. Chmura discussed how strict Caldwell NJ was about issuing permits for removing trees on private properties.

Pending Business

Update on Annual Reporting

Mr. Barton reviewed what information he will be receiving from DPW and from Matt Petitjean, former Shade Tree Chairman. Mr. Linson will be contributing information. This data is being requested by the State. January 1st is the deadline for submission. Mr. Barton has copied in Mayor Harris on all the submissions.

Update on Continuing Education Credits

Mr. Fekete noted that as of now 8 more units are needed to be earned by Commissioners. Chrmn. Carroll suggested a couple of extra units could be earned to be on the safe side. Mr. Fekete pointed out that four of the courses require classroom attendance.

Regarding possible funding, Mr. Fekete discussed the “Friends of the Shade Tree” organization that existed some years ago. Maybe it can be resurrected for projects that come up, like the Scarlet Oak on Lum Avenue this past summer.

Update of Lum Tree

Chrmn. Carroll reported that he had attended a meeting this morning with Borough Administrator Bob Falzarano, Asst. Administrator Steve Williams, Council Members Collander and Holman to discuss the future of the Lum Ave. tree.

Chairman Carroll said in January the Commission can discuss what type of fence should be installed. He also discussed starting the Scarlet Oak Foundation, a non-profit organization, independent of the Borough, to support any future tree and environmental situations needing attention in the Chatham Borough area.

Update Fall Planting

Chrmn. Carroll noted that these plantings for local homeowners will take place in the next two weeks. He needed help with the flags.

Chrmn. Carroll suggested that at the January 19th meeting. Commissioners could vote on an agenda budget item to hiring Mr. Linson to inspect some additional Borough trees.

Miscellaneous

Chrmn. Carroll reported on a recent e-mail about a tree on the corner of 200 Washington Avenue. The tree was scheduled to be taken down. A resident stopped the contractor from removing the tree.

Mr. Torello noted that 20% to 25% of this tree's canopy is in decline. He pointed out that it's serious when deterioration begins, like this instance, on a tree's canopy and works its way down. Mr. Linson added that, even if the tree is pruned, the tree, if lucky, would have only have 2 or 3 years more of life.

Chrmn. Carroll suggested another look at the tree could be taken in the springtime.

On another matter, Chrmn. Carroll reported that trees were removed at 14 Amherst Road. He noted at the down-side corner there is a 3-pronged oak tree with a gaping hole. Chrmn. Carroll suggested Mr. Torello check on this tree. Mr. Torello agreed; however, he will make sure it's a Borough tree, not a Township tree. The border line runs close to this site.

Mrs. Drew confirmed with Chrmn. Carroll that the Shade Tree Commission write-up for the Borough Calendar has been revised. Also, Mrs. Drew distributed a hand-out from Manasquan, NJ, concerning a tree-buying program for residents at discounted rates. This program has been very successful. Mrs. Drew felt such a tree-buying program would do well in Chatham Borough.

On another issue, Mrs. Drew reported that a sidewalk is being proposed on the other side of her street, on Inwood Road. Fourteen mature trees, including a Scarlet Oak, will have to be removed for this second sidewalk. Mrs. Drew believed these were Borough trees, not Township trees. She felt that the Shade Tree Commission should take a stand to protect neighborhood trees like these from being removed.

Chrmn. Carroll suggested that in the new year Mr. Linson could check out this Scarlet Oak tree to certify that it's healthy. Assuming it's healthy, the Commission could then take appropriate action. There may be other options to save that stretch of trees.

Liaison Reports

Borough Council

Council Member Kass was not present to give a report.

Resolution #15-09

The Commissioners approved the minutes of the November 17, 2015 meeting.

At 8:45 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Shade Tree Commission meeting will be held on January 19, 2016, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Upper Level, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler
Recording Secretary