

CHATHAM BOROUGH SHADE TREE COMMISSION
June 16, 2020 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Colleen Truppo called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Shade Tree Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. This was a Virtual Meeting held by Zoom. The Open Public Meetings Act was read aloud. The Mission Statement of the Shade Tree Commission was read aloud.

Names	Present	Absent
Colleen Truppo, Chrmn.	X	
Kristy Chmura, Vice Chrmn.	X	
Fran Drew	X	
Dean Wilson		X
John Tortorella	X	
Patrick Florentino	X	
Beverly Klepper	X	
Council Member Karen Korokiewicz	X	
Liz Holler, Minutes Clerk	X	

Please note: The virtual recording of this meeting “did not take”. The minutes come from my notes. – L. Holler

Remembering Commissioner Ken Chmura

Chrmn. Truppo gave a nice tribute to the late Ken Chmura who passed away suddenly. He was very active on the Borough Shade Tree Commission.

Commissioners also noted that he was very involved with the Chatham Borough Historical Society and operated the TV cameras for numerous Borough Council Meetings. He will be very missed.

Vice Chrmn. Kristy Chmura thanked her fellow Commissioners for their kind sympathy cards and emails to her and her mother at this difficult time. She felt a memorial tree would be an excellent way to honor her father’s memory. Other friends have expressed an interest in planting trees in his memory.

Public Comment

There was none.

Tree Plantings

Chrmn. Truppo gave an update on the Commission's tree planting program. Unfortunately, the original tree nursery, where the saplings would come from, has backed out on this program. The Commission still has an extensive list of residents waiting for their plantings.

Council Member Korokiewicz reported. that once Chatham Borough adopts a budget, probably in July, the Shade Tree Commission will know how much money it is has in its own budget. She explained how the Borough's budget is timed.

Chrmn. Truppo thanked Mr. Torello, the Director of Public Works, for attending tonight's meeting, especially helping with the Commission's tree planting program. The Commission will try to get the right trees in the ground, at the right time of year.

Mr. Torello noted that the number of tree requests submitted to the Shade Tree Commission is a great deal more than what can be obtained this year. He recalled that a number of Borough trees have died because of a fungus. The Commission must give the tree nurseries a "heads-up" on what type of trees would do well in the Borough. Mr. Torello suggested the Commission think about buying fewer trees, but better trees. The Commission should reach out to quality nurseries.

Mrs. Drew suggested The Farm in Green Village be considered. She felt a good price could be negotiated. Mr. Torello believed that the better nurseries get "the cream of the crop" when it comes to obtaining trees.

Ms. Chmura asked that the Commission think about obtaining larger tree plantings, in order to re-create the Borough's beautiful tree canopy from years ago. Chrmn. Truppo agreed with her suggestion.

On that point, Mr. Torello reminded Commissioners that they must keep in mind the electric powerlines that interact with growing trees.

Mr. Tortorella raised the question of whether the Commission prioritizes homeowner requests at the expense of planting trees where the Borough needs them. He pointed out that the initiative to move electrical power lines underground was an important one, but could take a long time. He suggested that in the meantime, new trees could be planted in open spaces throughout the Borough in locations where they would not interfere with overhead electrical lines. Mr.

Tortorella suggested that the Commission prioritize planting trees in places where they would have the greatest positive impact on the canopy before fulfilling private requests.

Chrmn. Truppo suggested the homeowners on the waiting list be asked to wait a couple of more years, because of the Borough itself may need tree plantings in public places.

Mr. Torello reminded Commissioners official permission is needed for planting trees on County and State roads.

Mr. Tortorella suggested the Commission focus on planting trees on municipal roads where they would not interfere with existing electrical lines.

It was noted that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Chmura, not too long ago, had visited two spots where the Commission could plant Dawn Redwoods: Kelley's Pond and near the Library of the Chathams.

Mrs. Drew discussed the matter of JCP & L aggressively trimming local trees. She recommended residents be educated on the how and the why of underground wiring. She pointed out that Governor Murphy wants all New Jersey wiring to be installed underground. Such a measure would keep our trees from being disfigured.

Mrs. Drew felt that the Planning Board and Zoning Board should be informed of developers taking down trees and putting in grass. She will email Commissioners a copy of Florham Park's Shade Tree ordinance.

Ms. Chmura expressed concerns about a recent application before the Zoning Board, which was proposing the removal of trees at the back of Garden Park.

In answer to Ms. Chmura's comments, Mr. Torello explained the tree removal permit process which developers must follow in the Borough. Mr. Torello himself has checked the number of people who pay the required escrow fee when a tree is removed. He explained how these tree removal permits are processed. They are also tracked by the Borough. Mr. Torello told Commissioners if they ever observe a tree, that they believe is being illegally removed, they should call him.

Chrmn. Truppo asked what the response on tree issues since the Coronavirus has begun.

Mr. Torello answered that there has been an increase of people calling the Borough on tree situations since the pandemic began. More people are at home now, paying closer attention to trees.

CEU Units

Chrmn. Truppo urged Commissioners to undertake some more webinars. The State is insistent that the Commission needs more credits.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

The Commission approved the minutes of the February 18, 2020 Shade Tree Commission meeting.

Miscellaneous

Commissioners discussed a request from Susan Allen's request, on behalf of the Chatham Historical Society, for a sapling from the Salem Oak. Mr. Torello reported that Chatham Borough is on the waiting list for this sapling, but delivery will be in the fall. It's not a good idea to plant a sapling like this in hot weather. Only one sapling per town is permitted.

Ms. Chmura said she will notify Mrs. Allen that the requested sapling is in the works.

Mr. Torello stated that a good location will be decided on for this sapling. The Town & Country Garden Club wants to nurture this tree.

Mrs. Drew expressed an interest in planting two giant evergreens in Ken Chmura's memory.

Ms. Chmura noted that Rozella Clyde, a local resident and volunteer, also would like to donate a tree in her father's memory. Ms. Chmura suggested residents could consider planting trees on their own properties to honor her father's memory.

The Commissioners discussed the Green Giants tree planting program. Possibly some could be planted near the Borough gazebo. Ms. Chmura and Mrs. Drew will look at possible locations for the Green Giants and will touch base with Mr. Torello on this project.

At 8:40 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Shade Tree Commission Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, 7:30 p.m. It will probably be another virtual meeting, held by Zoom.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler, Minutes Clerk