

Borough of Demarest

Shade Tree Commission 8/13/2026 Minutes

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Linda Cetta opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with the following announcement: PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING: The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey have been satisfied by the inclusion of the date, time and place of this regular meeting and notice of regular meeting was posted at Borough Hall, was mailed to The Record and was filed with the Borough Clerk of the Borough of Demarest on January 23, 2026.

Roll call: Present, Linda Cetta, Maureen Neville, Faye Sloan, Norman NG, Ted Alevrontas, Kathy Kobylarz, Council Liaison Adam Collins. Absent, Dimitri Gatanas

Approval of minutes: July 9, 2026, amending #3 adding an N to Falkenstern and #4 removing "All members will need to tag the trees," to "If the members can tag the trees and if they wish to do so, they will." A motion to approve was made by Maureen Neville, 2nd by Norman NG, all were in favor. A revised copy will be provided at the next meeting.

Faye Sloan requested an update on the CRS tree plantings. Linda Cetta replied that it will be discussed later in the meeting.

Old Business: Operating budget \$39,800.44 and Trust \$13,645.00. Linda Cetta shares the invoices for the storm damages, the amount of the storm damage costs from the recent storms, and what money is encumbered for the 5-year plan. Linda Cetta also shared her confusion about the addresses/locations that had tree damage. Adam Collins clarifies the addresses/locations. Norman NG reported that the meeting to discuss a change in the ordinance with Boro Administrator, Julie Falkenstern, Council Woman Sharon Carmeli, and Linda Cetta. Shade Tree would like the change to be to require new construction to plant trees in the Borough Right of Way. Norman NG expresses the concerns people might have regarding trees falling but states it will take 50 years for a 2" caliper tree to fall. Procedure to have this change in the ordinance was discussed. Norman NG asked if members of the Commission can attend the Mayor and Council Meeting to encourage this change, Adam Collins replied, it's an open meeting, anyone can attend. Linda Cetta added, it's a one sentence change.

New Business: NJSTF is October 22, 2026. Attending members of the ST Commission will be Linda Cetta, Maureen Neville, Kathy Kobylarz, Norman NG, and Ted Alevrontas. Norman NG and Ted Alevrontas will receive Core Training. Linda notes that Lee Campbell, Secretary to the ST Commission is certified in Core Training. Linda Cetta will speak to the DPW Director and see if an employee of DPW would like to receive Core Training. Clarification of emergency declarations was given by Linda Cetta, determining what an emergency is, elevated risk, and not a priority. She also explained that the FD, PD, Director of DPW and OEM can make the determination if an emergency tree removal is necessary. Maureen Neville added that OEM must attend training on all levels including trees. Linda Cetta is requesting that the term All Department Heads can make the decision if it is a public safety hazard be removed. Adam Collins assured the Commission that a department head in the Finance Department will not decide if a tree is a public safety hazard. Linda Cetta also made it a point that the Borough Arborist or a tree contractor cannot determine that a tree needs to be removed as an emergency. Linda Cetta stated she has a discrepancy with how the procedure for this past storm damage was done. Norman NG requested the count of trees that are on the current removal list. Linda Cetta replied 20 and they will get prioritized for removal. Faye Sloan asked if Linda Cetta and Dimitri Gatanis are not available, who makes decisions for tree removals in an emergency. Linda Cetta replied, "Emergency people on the list." Spending holds are in effect. Adam Collins explains there is a budget meeting for all departments next week. Maureen Neville suggested for future budgets, there should be a line item for emergency tree removal. Planting at CRS, The Shade Tree Commission is not in the position to plant 3 trees at the school. Linda Cetta requested Faye Sloan to get in touch with the principal to let him know planting is on hold. Faye Sloan requested at least one tree be planted. Norman NG also asked if there would be Fall planting? Due to budget issues, there is a hold on Fall planting.

Open to the public: A motion to open to the public was made by Maureen Neville and 2nd by Norman NG. All were in favor. No one from the public attended. Motion to close to the public was Maureen Neville and 2nd Norman NG, all were in favor.

Further discussions: Norman NG strongly encourages the change in the ordinance and whoever can attend the Mayor and Council meeting should. Linda Cetta brought up the question of whether the trust account can be used for Fall Planting? Adam Collins replied that the money in the trust should be preserved. Faye Sloan wanted to know who will be doing the planting at CRS? Linda replied, DPW. Adam Collins added it is school property, not Borough property, the school has its own grounds keeper. Faye Sloan added there was a tree removed next door and wanted to know how she could find out if they had a permit. It was suggested she contact Lee Campbell.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm Norman NG 2nd by Ted Alevrontas, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Campbell, Shade Tree Secretary