

**Borough of Demarest**  
**Shade Tree Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**

**November 7, 2024**

**Chair,** Linda Cetta opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

**Present:** Linda Cetta, Norman NG, Ronnie Friedman, Dimitri Gatanas, Council Liaison, Adam Collins. **Absent:** Maureen Neville, Faye Sloan

**Amendment:** Minutes from September 5, 2024, regular meeting, Old Business: Dimitri Gatanas made a motion to plant ten trees in the next planting season. Dimitri Gatanas motioned to approve September 25, 2024, minutes with amendment, Linda Cetta second the motion, all were in favor.

**Old Business:** The Trust account funds for Shade Tree was discussed. Linda Cetta explained the amounts fluctuate due to the number of trees that have been removed, pending invoices, and funds from permit collections.

Council Liaison Adam Collins questioned how many hazardous trees are still in existence. Chair, Linda Cetta replied, "14 which will be removed by the end of the year." 10 Trees at the duck pond were planted.

By vote, at the September 5, 2024, meeting, to change the "Hazardous Tree Removal List" to "Tree Removal List".

**New Business:** Borough Administrator, Julie Falkenstern provided the Commission with a template for the Shade Tree Commission to review for contractual tree removal and maintenance. A motion by Dimitri Gatanas was entered, second by Ronnie Friedman, all were in favor of having the Mayor and Council consider going out to bid for contractual services.

Emergency situations were discussed regarding having a separate line item for Emergencies.

Bylaws were reviewed and tabled till the next meeting.

January 9, 2025, Re-org meeting will be confirmed once the Mayor and Council's Re-org date is set.

Discussed was changing the meeting schedule of every other month to monthly meetings. The change will be included in the Bylaws.

Maureen Neville, (not present) expressed prior concerns that the handling of purchase orders by the Finance Dept. Dimitri Gatanas requested the amount of mitigation that was collected. Linda Cetta replied, "\$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00" Linda will confirm with the Finance Department on the amounts collected. Linda Cetta informed the members that the budget was cut once the Trust Account was established.

Dimitri Gatanas raised his concerns about tree inspections on private property.

The NJSTF Conference was attended by Linda Cetta, Maureen Neville, and Norman NG. By attending, 12 CEU's were earned.

27 Elm Pl., ST Secretary, Lee Campbell will send a registered letter to the owners with notification that a tree on their property identified as a 56 DBH Higan Cherry Tree can be classified as a landmark tree. A report from Ray Slaman will be submitted to the Mayor and Council regarding the Higan Cherry Tree at 27 Elm Pl. The resident will be invited to the Mayor and Council meeting to voice any concerns. A motion was made by Damitri Gatanas to present reports declaring a landmark tree to the Mayor and Council, Second Norman NG, all were in favor.

Newly planted trees: Damitri Gatanas will work with DPW to create a watering system to water newly planted trees using the watering tank that Shade Tree previously purchased. Dimitri Gatanas will report to the Commission at the next meeting for the schedule.

**Open to the public:** Mr. Ray Cywinski addressed the Commission on the need for bylaws, the standards to declare a tree a landmark Tree, and the use of the Trust Fund money. Mr. Cywinski, on behalf of his neighbor at 258 County Rd. formerly known as 555 Piermont Ave. expressed his concerns, he has with the Shade Tree Commissions decision of denial to remove trees at 258 County Rd. Mr. Cywinski explained that the root systems were heavily damaged from construction and the negligence of the builder causing these trees to be hazardous. Dimitri Gatanas raised the question, 'If there was tree protection during construction and were there inspections performed? Mr. Cywinski stated," there was not." Linda Cetta reported that the enforcement comes from the Construction Official, not the Property Maintenance Official. The Shade Tree Commission suggested that an appeal be submitted to the Mayor and Council for the removal of damaged trees at 258 County Rd. Jonathan Lau,

100 Knickerbocker Rd. expressed his concerns regarding three Borough Trees that are uprooting his sidewalk. The Commission reported two trees are being removed by the County and the third tree is contracted to be removed by the Borough. The Shade Tree Secretary will notify Mr. Lau by email of the removal. No one else from the public attended.

**Adjournment:** Ronnie Friedman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm seconded by Norman NG all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted, Lee Campbell Shade Tree Secretary