

Borough of Demarest
Shade Tree Commission
Official Minutes

January 9, 2025

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 in the annual schedule and notice of regular meetings is posted at Borough Hall, was mailed to The Star Ledger and The Record and was filed with the Borough Clerk of the Borough of Demarest on December 31, 2024.

Meeting opened at 7:05 pm

Commission Liaison Adam Collins swears in Maureen Neville, term to end 2030

Roll Call, at the time of roll call, present were Linda Cetta, Maureen Neville Faye Sloan, Damitri Gatanas, and Commission Liaison, Adam Collins Ronnie Friedman joined the meeting at 7:50 pm. Absent, Norman NG

Approval of November Minutes, 1st Damitri Gatanas 2nd Maureen Neville, all were in favor.

Approval of December Meeting, 1st Maureen Neville, Faye Sloan, all were in favor.

Election of Chair, Vice Chair, Maureen Neville motions to have Damitri Gatanas as chair. Damitri replies due to his schedule, he would not be able to fulfill the Chair position and motions to have Linda Cetta remain as Chair. Maureen Neville motions to have Dimitri as Vice Chair, all were in favor.

Linda Cetta discusses the remaining budget for 2024 was \$750.00 in the operating budget. The approved 2024 operating budget was \$30,000.00. Maureen Neville will review the budget and report on monies received and spent. Commission Liaison Adam Collins to follow up with Borough Administrator Julie Falkenstern on contractual services for tree removal and pruning.

Meeting dates for 2025 are moved to the 2nd Thursday, of every month, at 7:00 pm so Council Women Daryl Fox can attend if needed. 1st to motion Maureen Neville, 2nd Faye Sloan, all were in favor.

A discussion to rehire Borough Arborist, Ray Slayman to continue field inspections for Shade Tree when necessary. Ray Slayman offered to conduct every inspection when he met with Linda Cetta for a brief meeting. Dimitri Gatanas shared his concerns regarding Ray Slayman's inspections and would like for the Commission to maintain their inspections and have Ray Slayman as needed. Faye Sloan requested to shadow Ray Slayman on inspections to seek guidance on inspections. A motion to have Ray Slayman as Borough Arborist for 2025 was made by Faye Sloan, second by Maureen Neville, all were in favor.

Linda Cetta gave the date for the NJSTF for 2025 and requested all attend. Also discussed were putting a plan to have an emergency fund for emergency tree services.

Linda Cetta reported on a tree that fell across Piermont Road that was covered in vines. Shade Tree will plan to start pruning necessary trees in the Borough Right of Way, starting by districts. Trees with vines should be maintained by the DPW. Dimitri Gatanas suggests Mayor Berstein request in his newsletter to report to Borough Hall if they see trees with vines on them.

Linda Cetta discusses joining the Garden Club and sharing different programs offered by Schools, The Nature Center, and Community outreach for planting new trees. Issues for Spring plantings and the drought are concerns of the Shade Tree Commission. Linda Cetta suggests hiring an outside vendor for watering and adds the water tank Shade Tree purchased for DPW to do watering is not getting utilized and the water tank is too small. Dimitri Gatanas adds he will work with Jason, the DPW Manager, to have a watering schedule for newly planted trees in Borough Parks and Right of Ways as opposed to having the annual plantings receiving precedence. The encouragement of residents receiving trees is of importance. Adam Collins reminds the Commission that The Fall season for tree planting was difficult due to leaf season and the drought. Dimitri Gatanas adds that Fall planting should be done in October, and questions, who funds the annual plantings in the Borough. Maureen Neville replies, the Garden Club. Linda Cetta adds that she wanted to fill areas with trees such as the Post Office but received feedback that it would be of concern to cars that are parked will damage their doors on the trees. Dimitri Gatanas suggests that the Shade Tree and Garden Club work together. Faye Sloan comments on how beautiful the downtown is and suggests the Boy/Girl Scouts can volunteer their time at Davies Arboretum.

27 Elm Place, The Shade Tree Commission is rescinding on declaring a Landmark Tree at 27 Elm Place due to lack of interest by the resident.

Cemetery restoration is a priority for Shade Tree. Damitri Gatanas provided a plan and links regarding the history of the Cemetery and if grants are available for restoring the Cemetery. Linda Cetta replied that the Cemetery is not declared a Historical Landmark. Suggestions that residents can make donations to help offset the costs of the landscape renovation. Adam Collins offered to research whether open space grants can be used for funding and will report back to the Commission at the next meeting and Boro Administrator Julie Falkenstern, and DPW Manager Jason Gangi to discuss plans for restoring the Cemetery. Dimitri Gatanas adds that the project should be a Shade Trees project. Faye Sloas asks who the Borough Historian is, a reply from Maureen Nevelle that there is no longer a Historian Society, but the Borough Historian is Maryann Clarke who has much knowledge of the Borough's history. A motion to present plans of the restoration of the Cemetery to the Mayor was presented, all were in favor.

Faye Sloas asks who the Borough Historian is, a reply from Maureen Nevelle that there is no longer a Historian Society, but the Borough Historian is Maryann Clarke who has much knowledge of the Borough's history. Dimitri Gatanas explains what is involved in having a Historical Society.

The budget for 2025 was submitted requesting a budget of \$90,000.00. Linda Cetta notified the Commission Members that the Five-Year Plan for Shade Tree will need to be taken from the budget. Dimitri Gatanas requested to review the previous Five-Year Plan and perhaps he can do the Five-Year Plan instead of using the budget. Linda Cetta explains that it is a tedious procedure and the Shade Tree Commission benefits from having Paul Cowey and Associates.

Change in memberships to the Commission are as follows, Faye Sloan from Alternate to Member. At this time, Ronnie Friedman has notified the Commission that she is resigning, effective immediately. Adam Collins advises Ronnie Friedman to submit her resignation to the Borough Administrator, Julie Falkenstern.

No one from the public was present.

At 8:05 pm, a motion to Adjourn was made by Faye Sloan, second, Maureen Neville, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Campbell

Shade Tree Commission Secretary