

Borough of Demarest
Shade Tree Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Amended

February 13, 2025

Chair, Linda Cetta read the 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 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 January 15, 2025.

Present: Chair, Linda Cetta, Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas, Members Maureen Neville, and Norman NG. Also in attendance, Council Liaison, Adam Collins

Absent: Faye Sloan

Old Business: Ray Slaman was contracted for one calendar year to be the Borough Arborist. Members of the Commission had a meeting with the Finance Committee discussing the budget for 2024-2025. There was a discussion of the balance of the current budget and Trust Fund. Projection for the upcoming budget is hopeful, but a concern regarding the new Ordinance will not allow the permit fees to be deposited into the Trust Account. Chair, Linda Cetta requested an update of the new tree ordinance and suggested that the Shade Tree Commission reviews the ordinance for additional concerns and comments. Liaison, Adam Collins, will suggest the Ordinance Committee allow Shade Tree to review the final draft. Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas added that with a lower budget, purchasing of trees could become difficult and the tree lined streets and parks are an attraction to residents and future residents. Council Liaison, Adam Collins reassures the Commission that all of Shade Trees' needs/concerns are being reviewed to maintain the budget. Chair, Linda Cetta reports that Shade Tree is working off 25 percent of the operating budget and the Trust has \$16,000.00. Maureen Neville expressed her concern regarding the expenditures that Shade Tree is not notified about. Liaison Adam Collins explains the difference between the budget. Maureen Neville made a firm statement regarding Shade Tree getting notified as to what is being spent out of the budget. The Commission reversed the agenda to approve the minutes from January 9, 2025, A motion was called to approve the minutes by Maureen Neville, 2nd by Linda Cetta, all were in favor. Shade Tree will be going forward with the Opt-In plan for the Fall planting, Spring is questionable. Chair Linda Cetta reports that Business Administrator, Julie Faulkenstern is working on getting an RFQ sent out for going to bids on the Borough having a contract with a tree company. Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas suggests having the condition, in the RFQ, to have a wired certified tree company and would also like the Commission to review the RFQ prior to publication. Emergency tree services were discussed.

New Business: Chair, Linda Cetta and Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas discussed a meeting with Mayor Bernstein and plans to remove and replant the bushes at the Cemetery. Consideration in removal and replanting were addressed to not disturb the gravestones. Business Administrator, Julie Falkenstern was contacted by an Eagle Scout to volunteer with the Cemetery project. The Commission will investigate whether funds can be reimbursed for the project. Maureen Neville added the Grant Writer can research Grants. Chair, Linda Cetta discussed planting at the schools in the Borough and suggested that members of the Shade Tree Commission meet with the Building Manager at NVD to discuss planting in the ROW and contacting the Principal of County School and to get involved in educating students on trees. Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas expressed concerns about the previous trees planted at NVD need pruning. Chair, Linda Cetta discussed NJSTF Program is to fill public grounds and parks with Shade Trees. Off Topic, Chair, Linda Cetta, notified the Commission Members that she is a member of the Garden Club and expressed interest in teaming up with them to plant bushes and trees at Davies Arboretum. Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas, would like to see the involvement of Ray Slayman and the Boy/Girl Scouts to participate in helping to identify the species and ages of the trees in the Nature Center and Davie Arboretum. Arbor Day was discussed and will be held in the later part of April. Last year 100 seedlings were distributed, and Shade Tree will stive to distribute the same this year.

Open To The Public: No one from the public attended.

Motion To Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas 2nd by Maureen Neville, all were in favor.

Respectfully,

Shade Tree Secretary, Lee Campbell