

Borough of Demarest  
Shade Tree Commission  
Official Minutes

October 9, 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. The meeting opened at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call: At the time of roll call, present were Chair, Linda Cetta, Member, Norman NG, Alt #1, Kathy Kobylarz Council Liaison, Adam Collins. Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas, attended the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Old Business: Chair, Linda Cetta opened the meeting to the public: In attendance there were residents from 4 Bogert Rd. and 16 Everett Rd. Concerns regarding the planting at the cemetery were discussed. Resident, 4 Bogert Rd. expressed the gaps in the planting has caused a clear view of the cemetery from her home. DPW agreed to move the bushes with Shade Tree's permission. Resident, 16 Everett Rd. raised questions why were the residents in the area notified of the plantings, and can see the cemetery from every room in his home and stated, "There is a watering issue, how are the new plants going to survive?" Council Liaison Collins replied, "DPW has a watering schedule, and the Mayor and Members of the Council have contacted Veolia to see if there can be a trickle line installed. Council Liaison Collins will update the residents as the information is given to him.

Operating budget: Chair, Linda Cetta reported the operating budget remains for the year \$17,017.40, to date, Trust has remaining in its fund, \$19,140.00. Roughly \$28,000.00 was spent on removal, pruning, and planting. The Trust fund.

Stelfox Mitigation Program: Plans for mitigation are currently being worked on by Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas with approximately 26 major and minor trees. Chair, Linda Cetta expressed her concern with planting the Paperback Maple Tree. She stated, "The bark sheds and people think the trees are dying." A preliminary plan was reviewed by the Shade Tree Commission during the meeting. Once the plans are final, the Commission will present them to the Mayor and Council for review. Shade Tree will not be responsible for funding the mitigation project. Chair, Linda Cetta requested a vote from the members to approve having herself and Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas to present the plan, all were in favor. Liaison, Adam Collins suggested when presenting the plan to have various quotes for the purchase of the trees and to follow up with the Borough Administrator or Shade Tree Secretary for the procedure.

The Cemetery Project was reintroduced for discussion by Chair Gatanas by noting to the public that the project took a lot of planning and was done with the intention of beautifying the Cemetery while remaining respectful to the people who are buried there. A discussion of the Mayor's suggestion to

purchase more Skip Laurels to have them stagger between the Skip Laurels that are there. Chair Cetta made a point that the remaining money in the budget will be spent on tree removal and pruning and suggested the Mayor use money from the general budget to purchase the additional bushes. Member, Norman NG suggested having the DPW move one or two bushes to close the gap. Liaison, Collins Shade suggested the Commission meet with Acting Chief Visaggio, and DPW Manager to ensure if the bushes are moved, it won't be an obstruction of view. Tree will need to save what they have left in the budget for the 5-year plan that will be coming up for renewal next year since the budget for next year is unknown. Liaison Collins responded that he cannot comment on the budget for next year, and the Finance Committee meets to discuss the budget for next year. Vice Chair, Gatanas requested to have the cemetery project remain on future agendas until a solution is reached that satisfies the residents and the Mayor and Council/Shade Tree Commission.

The Shade Tree Commission purchased 14 bushes for the Garden Club. They were planted in the Borough Easement by County Road School by Owen Fox who volunteered his time to plant them. Chair, Cetta would like Shade Tree to partner up with the Garden Club for future projects.

Fall planting: The opt in program was successful with 27 residents who requested trees to be planted in the Borough Right of Way.

Chair, Cetta discussed the upcoming NJSTF Conference and will be attending with Members, NG and Kobylarz. CEU's will be earned, which is a requirement to maintain the membership status for NJSTF. Alt. #1, Kobylarz will be receiving CORE Training and her certification while attending the Conference.

Chair Linda Cetta acknowledged the Nature Center for their effort they put in at Demarest Day to bring awareness to the Center. Member NG would like to have Shade Tree participate in future events the Borough hosts to bring awareness to the Shade Tree Commission.

New Business: Chair, Cetta would like the members to vote on the opt in program for Spring 2026 1<sup>st</sup> was Vice Chair, Gatanas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Member NG, all were in favor. Liaison Collins questioned if Shade Tree has budgeted for the purchase of the trees for the program and what is the estimated cost per tree. Chair Cetta replied, "money from the trust and operating budget can be used to purchase the trees and the cost per tree is about \$225.00." Council Liaison Collins asked if there is a cut off for the number of trees requested. Chair, Cetta replied, "No" Vice Chair Gatanas questioned if the residents can pick the species of trees that are being requested, Chair Cetta replied to Vice Chair Gatanas, no. Only the Chair and Vice Chair can pick the species depending on the availability at the Nursery. Vice Chair Gatanas suggested the Shade Tree Secretary post on the Borough website the different species that were purchased.

Open to the public: No one from the public was present.

A motion to adjourn at 7:55 pm was made by Norman NG, second by Dimitri Gatanas, all were in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Campbell

Shade Tree Commission Secretary