

Borough of Demarest
Shade Tree Commission
Official Minutes

November 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. The meeting opened at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call: Present Chair, Linda Cetta, Vice Chair, Dimitri Gatanas, Member, Norman NG, Alt #1, Kathy Kobylarz Council Liaison, Adam Collins. Absent: Members Maureen Neville, Faye Sloan

A motion to approve the minutes from September 11, 2025, and October 9, 2025, by member Norman NG, 2ND Vice Chair Dimitri Gatanas.

Old Business:

Linda Cetta reported on the budget, operating budget has \$16,787.43, Trust has \$20,140.00. A quote from DeCarlo Tree Masters was accepted for the Fall tree removal and pruning for trees in the ROW in the amount of \$11,750.00 which will be deducted from the operating budget. There are four new trees to be removed. The Commission discussed the temporary halt on budgets. Council Liasian Collins explains the halt was requested by the Borough Auditors to all Departments and the Finance Department is working hard to get the finances under control. Dimitri Gatanas also expressed the importance of removing hazardous trees.

27 trees were requested with the opt-in program. The cost of the trees is estimated at \$250.00 per tree. DPW will plant the trees once they are delivered.

NJSFT Conference was attended by Linda Cetta, Norman NG and Kathy Kobylarz. Kathy Kobylarz received her CORE training certificate, and the Commission earned 10 CEU's which will carry over to next year.

Linda Cetta updated the members on the absences of Faye Sloan and Maureen Neville.

Stelfox Mitigation Program: Plans for mitigation were submitted to the Mayor and Council by Linda Cetta for approval. Linda Cetta expressed how much time and effort went into the project and on several occasions, she was accompanied by members of the Commission at different stages of the planning for the mitigation project. Funds for this project were not spent through the Shade Tree budget or the Trust Account.

The Cemetery Project was reintroduced for discussion by Dimitri Gatanas, stating purchasing additional bushes to close in the opening for the residents that are unhappy is not something Shade Tree should be spending money on. Norman NG added that he was working with Jason Gangi from

DPW to possibly move the opening and questioned if additional spending would be allowed? Linda Cetta replied, No.

New Business:

After reviewing the Bylaws, the Shade Tree Commission voted to amend Chapter V Section B to be written as follows: Approved expenditures processed through the CFO in accordance with the Borough purchasing and auditing procedures.

While attending the NJSFT, Norman NG and Linda Cetta learned about a tree planting program in the town of Manalapan where the residents can purchase trees through the Shade Tree Commission and have them planted in their yard. Information will be shared at the next meeting.

Dates and times were discussed for 2026. Linda Cetta would like to continue having the meetings on the 2nd Thursday of every month but suggested moving the time to 7:30 pm. Dimitri Gatanas replied 7:00 pm is more convenient. Council Liasian Collins added there are other meetings scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm that could interfere with the Shade Tree Meeting.

Shade Tree must submit an annual report to the Borough Clerk for distribution to the Mayor and Council no later than January 30th. Linda Cetta requested any information that other Members would like to add to the report. Dimitri Gatanas asked if the Commission maintains records regarding the tree removals. Linda Cetta replied yes. Dimitri Gatanas would like the Cemetery project to be included in the report. Linda Cetta and Dimitri Gatanas will work together on the report.

Discussions about filling the empty seats. Council Liasian Collins will speak with Mayor Bernstein and follow up at the next meeting. Dimitri Gatanas suggested it be advertised on the electronic board.

There was no motion to open to the public.

A motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm was made by Norman NG, second by Kathy Kobylarz, all were in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Campbell

Shade Tree Commission Secretary