

Leonia Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes for January 10, 2024

Present were Commissioners Christine Healy-Sammis, Imanta Bergmanis, Vivian DeMarco, Mark Spiegel, Arnold Trachtenberg, Ann Brown Sullivan, Sandy Pancrazi. Additionally, present were Diane Scarangella (Council Liaison) and Chuck Moren (DPW).

Absent: Laura-Lindsay Sewell, Julie Ulbrich

Statement of Compliance with Sunshine Law

Public Portion: Open to comments questions from Leonia residents (none present)

Minutes of December 2023 were approved.

Counsel Liaison Report presented by Diane Scarangella as the new STC liaison.

Chairperson Report: 1. Our 2024 operating and capital budget is due February 2024. 2. Welcomed 3 new commissioners this year, Arnold, Ann and Sandy. 3. Overpeck Area 4 – still awaiting Leonia representation on the Bergen County planned commission for Area 4 planning and planting.

Commissioner's Report: No new reports.

Discussion on STC reorganization – Positions needing to be filled – Chair (Co-chairs), Secretary (shared duty amongst all with schedule to be announced), Marketing Chair(s) -Nixle, Town Calendar, website, tax mailings, etc., Fall/Spring 2024 plantings, Walk-About Chair(s), Planning Board Liaison(s). Though no permanent assignments were made, Ann interested in Walk-About and Marketing/On-line, Arnold -Spotted Lantern Fly Education/resources, Leonia Day, and Mark and Arnold as shared Planning Board Reps. All members were asked to consider all roles and further re-org appointments tabled for next meeting.

Downtown revitalization – discussed downtown planting sites/pits for new trees with ballasts to be planted in 2024. Will need subcommittee to further pursue. New soil in all pits as reviewed with Engineering assistant, John Villareal and Christine Healy.

Private Property Planting – all commissioners were asked to approach homeowners if there are appropriate front yard planting sites for Spring 2024 planting. Each commissioner to attempt to find 2-3 sites for this next planting.

Spring 2024 Planting – all members to attempt to secure 3-5 sites for planting with greatest push for Private Property Planting (PPP) sites. All PPP site are planted with Shade Trees – a letter and possible tree species are list on the STC website.

Annual Application Filing Tree City USA and Growth Award – due by February 15, 2024 for the 2023 annual status.

Landmark Trees – 2 in Leonia at this time. Discussed designation of sites and possible QR plaques at these sites as are in Wood Park to teach residents about these magnificent trees.

Memorial Plantings – proposed further public outreach for these possibilities.

K-12 Tree Campus – possible further work with Public Schools would be possible to work on achieving Tree Campus status for the Leonia Public Schools. Would need to partner with teachers and students to accomplish this for 2024.

STC volunteers/HS students – discussion about possible HS student involvement in STC.

CEUs: New Jersey STC Federation will be offering it's annual Tree Conference where new members will be able to take Core Training for tree evaluation training.

2024 Meeting dates – the STC members voted to continue to hold STC meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, except for February when the meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13. All meetings will begin at 7:30p and will be in an online meeting format unless otherwise specified.

DPW – Chuck noted that there was a Tree of Heaven, host tree to the spotted lantern fly, on public property. Agreed upon that this tree should be removed.

END OF MEETING

Minutes Submitted by Christine Healy-Sammis