

**RAMSEY SHADE TREE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Ramsey Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Mr. Melso at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 17, 2022. Also present were Mr. Beltramini, Mr. Englishman, Ms. Geist, Mr. Martone, Mr. McMahon, Mr. Rutkowski, Commission members, Ms. Cusick, Council Liaison, Mr. Trouf, Coordinator, and Mrs. Dey, Secretary. Mr. Gubala, Mr. Schumacher, and Mr. Geist, Board Attorney, were absent.

Mr. Melso announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Sunshine Laws of the State of New Jersey. Public notice of this meeting was published in the legal ads section of the BERGEN RECORD on Thursday, December 23, 2021 and the RIDGEWOOD NEWS on Friday, December 24, 2021.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Melso led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion by Mr. McMahon, seconded by Mr. Beltramini, the minutes of the February 17, 2022 meeting were unanimously accepted as received.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Martone initiated a discussion about the seven zones within Ramsey which need to be covered by the Commissioners. Mr. Beltramini will cover the area which was Ms. Geist's.

Mr. Melso reviewed what had been discussed at the recent joint Environmental Commission/Shade Tree Commission meeting. He noted that Paramus has the strictest ordinance on the books and there are also state guidelines. Mr. Melso further noted that sometimes it is the tree cutters who are not knowledgeable about or who do not care about the regulations. In other municipalities, such as Upper Saddle River, those tree cutters are required to put their tree care operator state license number on their trucks. Unlicensed tree cutters are not allowed to work in Upper Saddle River. The Shade Tree Commission is looking into a means to have "more teeth" with a stronger ordinance that enables the Commission to go after the tree cutters who ignore the borough ordinance. There was also the suggestion that rather than allowing six trees per year to be taken down, that number should be reduced to four. The original research which led to the decision about six trees was done by Mr. Beltramini, Mr. Englishman, Mr. Martone, and Mr. McMahon. There was a suggestion to use caliper inches to determine how many trees can be removed. The Shade Tree Commission encourages planting of replacement trees to replace those which are taken down but perhaps that needs to be added to the ordinance as a requirement. The governing body would need to change the ordinance, working together with Jared Geist, attorney for Shade Tree, and Bruce Whitaker, attorney

for the Planning Board. Mr. Melso would like a committee of three to meet and develop a step-by-step proposal which will eventually be given to the governing body. It would be possible to mirror the permit from Upper Saddle River. It is important that residents use licensed landscapers since some unregistered landscapers are applying fertilizers, for example, and also not posting. They need to be policed. Mr. Geist would formalize that proposal which would be coming from Shade Tree, and which would be signed off on by both Mr. Melso and Mr. Nerney, chairman of the Environmental Commission. It is vitally important to preserve the trees which the borough does have. The understory in the borough is rapidly disappearing. Mr. McMahon shared the number of ash trees which are coming down in the borough. Education is one part of the equation. A Shade Tree Commission "Did You Know?" fact sheet will be available at the Environmental Commission's upcoming annual clean-up day on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. In summary, the goal is to license tree cutters and landscapers in the borough and to develop a formula for tree removal based on caliper inches as a suggestion.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Board of Adjustment minutes-January 19, 2022  
Planning Board minutes-February 1, 2022

**TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS-None**

**SITE PLAN REVIEW-None**

**TREE REMOVAL PERMIT VIOLATIONS-None**

## **LANDSCAPING PLAN REVIEW**

### **Frezza, 24 Grant Street, Block 3608, Lot 21**

Alejandro Frezza of Airmont, New York, was in attendance to continue the presentation from the February meeting. Mr. Martone observed that four revisions had been needed, two of which were number changes on the plan. The irrigation portion needs to be improved; adding a number seventeen with the proper verbiage would solve that problem. Number eighteen would include deer barriers. The corner oak tree is not the borough's; Mr. Trouf and Mr. McMahon did take a look at it. Mr. Frezza would like to save that tree. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. McMahon, with the corrections as noted, the landscape plan was unanimously approved. Three fully corrected plans should be submitted as soon as possible. As a landscaper, Mr. Frezza shared his insights about the proposed landscaping permit which had been discussed earlier in the meeting as well as how things are done in Rockland County. To clarify, even though the state has a required permit, the borough would require one too.

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Beltramini	X			
Ms. Geist	X			
Mr. Gubala				X
Mr. Martone, Vice-Chairman	X			
Mr. McMahan	X			
Mr. Schumacher				X
Mr. Melso, Chairman	X			
Mr. Englishman, Alt. 1	X			
Mr. Rutkowski, Alt. 2	X			

### RESIDENTIAL SITE INSPECTIONS

All trees must be marked and there must be a decision about what to do with the stumps. Work order #3 has one tree on it.

Work Order #2

**Brookside Rd (next to white barns)**-The leaning tree will be removed.

**60 Nottingham Road**-The tree will be removed.

**Ronald Court**-Any limbs hanging over the roadway will be trimmed.

**Baker Court**-Eleven trees will be elevated and one tree will be removed.

**10 Baker Court (on Shadyside Road)**-Five ash trees will be removed, flush cut, leaving the stumps.

**491 Darlington Avenue and Alida Place**-A small cluster of dead maples will be removed.

**112 Sherwood Drive**-The dead wood will be removed.

**84 Myrtle Avenue**-Two trees will be removed.

**100 Fuhrman Avenue**-The ash tree will be removed.

**80 Upland Road**-The tree will be removed.

**191 Maple Street (across the street)**-The double ash tree will be removed, leaving the stump.

**95 Elm Street**-The ash tree will be removed.

**87 Maple Street (across the street on the bike path)**-The double trunk will be removed, leaving the stump.

**354 Elizabeth Street (well house property next door)**-Five trees will be elevated; three trees will be removed, leaving the stumps; two treetops (near the edge of the field) will be removed and chipped.

**Bike path (between 287 Elizabeth Avenue and 294 Maple Street)**-Dead wood will be removed from six trees; seven trees will be removed, leaving the stumps.

**Veteran's Park (Main Street side)**-The dead oak will be removed.

**299 East Main Street**-The maple will be trimmed and elevated away from the building.

## COMMERCIAL SITE INSPECTIONS

Mr. Mello reminded the Commissioners to keep their eyes open for any issues at the various commercial sites within their zones.

Mr. Beltramini read an e-mail from Len DiTomaso, updating the work being done at Brothers/Chilis, 900 Route 17 North.

## OLD BUSINESS

Four bids went out on Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> for the spring planting. Mr. McMahon noted that he has three spots for trees should a resident decide they do not want a tree. The Commissioners usually have direct contact the residents, but a letter needs to go to the homeowners as a back-up to that contact. They should be informed that a tree will be forthcoming and there will be mark-outs on their property.

## NEW BUSINESS

Mr. McMahon shared a situation at 5 Sycamore Court. The resident would now like the healthy oak tree, substantiated by an arborist report, removed. The residents were invited to attend the April meeting to discuss. The walkway could have been installed differently.

Ms. Cusick shared that \$175,750 is the proposed amount for the Shade Tree budget. Mr. McMahon noted that the trees which were planted in 2021 came from the Shade Tree Trust Account. There are a considerable number of ash trees coming down and they can be dangerous to remove. Mr. Mello suggested an amount of \$250,000, in part because of those ash trees removals and replantings. For example, to take a tree down costs about \$1,500 and a replacement is about \$550, meaning that to replant Hosking Way's

approximately twenty trees would cost about \$40,000. Hosking Way will be visited and marked so that the removals can go on the next work order. Tree removal fees for a resident are waived for the removal of ash trees. There was a discussion about how to let a homeowner know that they need to remove infested trees; a letter needs to be sent.

**PUBLIC COMMENT-None**

Mr. Melso announced that the Public Comment portion of the meeting would last approximately five minutes per person.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Beltramini, and carried unanimously.