

**RAMSEY SHADE TREE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Ramsey Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Mr. Melso at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 21, 2022. Also present were Mr. Beltramini, Mr. Englishman, Ms. Geist, Mr. Gubala, Mr. Martone, Mr. McMahon, Mr. Rutkowski, Commission members, Ms. Cusick, Council Liaison, Mr. Geist, Board Attorney, Mr. Trouf, Coordinator, and Mrs. Dey, Secretary. Mr. Schumacher was 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. Martone, seconded by Mr. Beltramini, the minutes of the March 17, 2022 meeting were unanimously accepted as received.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. McMahon reported that the Arbor Day tree has been planted by the pool. Photos will be taken on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Melso shared that Al Lapatka has passed away.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Board of Adjustment minutes-February 16, 2022

Planning Board minutes-March 1, 2022, March 15, 2022

Site Plan Waiver for Acura of Ramsey-There is a new owner; Mr. Beltramini will look at the site.

**TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS**

**441 Elizabeth Avenue, Block 3304, Lot 22**

**80 Shadyside Road, Block 2601, Lot 47**

The trees at each residence, approved for removal, were all ash trees. Mr. McMahon noted that 250 borough ash trees and 400 ash trees at private residences have been removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

**SITE PLAN REVIEW**-None

**TREE REMOVAL PERMIT VIOLATIONS**-None

**LANDSCAPING PLAN REVIEW**-None

### **RESIDENTIAL SITE INSPECTIONS**

All trees must be marked and there must be a decision about what to do with the stumps.

Ryan and Kimberly Scanlon, owners of 5 Sycamore Court, were present with Paul Arbadji of Natural Earth Landscape, 34 Poplar Street. The residents would like an oak tree removed from their property. Arborist Colin Milde provided an evaluation of the pin oak as requested by Mr. McMahon who noted that the borough does not take down healthy trees. Mr. Milde provided some suggestions which would enhance the tree's likelihood of surviving. In contrast, Mr. Arbadji stated that the property and the street would look better with the tree removed. The walkway has been changed twice, impacting the roots of the pin oak, creating what they consider a hazard. However, the roots can be steel-plated; the steel plate can be obtained from Van Grouw Welding in Wyckoff. Four new trees were proposed to be planted, meaning a gain of three trees on the property. The proposed plan was discussed by the Shade Tree Commissioners and then a vote was taken, resulting in a unanimous decision to "Not Remove." Mr. Melso informed the Scanlons that they do have the right of appeal.

Work Order #3

**134 Elbert Street**-Dead wood will be removed from the right-of-way side.

**60 Abbey Court**-The spider branches will be removed from the trunks on two trees.

**260 Grove Street (Green Acres)**-Two trees will be dropped; the stumps should be left.

**70 Blauvelt Avenue (next to Green Acres)**-Two trees will be removed.

**12 Elbert Street (across in Green Acres)**-One tree will be removed.

**30 Cobblestone Lane**-One tree will be removed.

**372 Canterbury Drive**-A branch over the roadway as well as any dead branches will be removed.

**70 Maple Street**-Seven trees will be removed.

**7 Mohawk Drive**-Dead wood will be removed from the tree.

**17 Thornhill Drive**-One tree will be removed.

**169 Twinbrook Court**-One tree will be removed.

Ash trees to be removed-

**91 Sherwood Drive**-The tree is dead.

**41 Collins Avenue**-The small ash to the left of the driveway will be removed.

**11 Harland Terrace**-Two ash trees will be removed.

**3 Colonial Heights Drive**-The ash tree on the corner of Crescent Avenue will be removed.

**Hosking Way**-Twenty-three ash trees will be removed.

**4 Lillian Court**-A three leader ash tree will be removed.

**5 Amanda Court**-The dead ash tree will be removed.

**6 Amanda Court**-The dead ash tree will be removed.

**146 North Spruce Street**-The ash tree across the street in the park will be removed.

**19 Carol Street**-The ash on the corner of North Spruce Street will be removed.

**83 Chestnut Street**-The dead ash tree will be removed.

**128 Church Street**-The dead ash tree will be removed.

**8 Lincoln Street**-Two dead ash trees to the left of the driveway will be removed.

**6 Canterbury Drive (in the island)**-A three leader ash tree will be removed.

**5 Morton Drive**-The dead ash tree will be removed.

**129 Canterbury Drive**-Two infected ash trees on the right side of the house will be removed.

**102 Broad Street**-The dead ash tree across the street will be removed.

**3, 5, and 6 Goose Cove Lane**-Four dead ash trees will be removed.

In addition to the trees on Hosking Way which need to be removed, one tree at 4 Manor Drive and one tree at 7 Manor Drive are the borough's responsibility. DPW is only able to remove two since the others are too big.

### **COMMERCIAL SITE INSPECTIONS**

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

There might be a violation at 87 and 99 Spring Street, Block 3608, Lots 11 and 12, Ramsey Auto Group. Due to the passing of Mr. Lapatka, the presentation was tabled until May.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Four bids went out on Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> for the spring planting. Two bids were returned, Above Par Landscaping (\$55,690) and Ascape Landscape (\$32,370). Ascape did a good job last year.

Mr. Melso initiated a discussion about an updated ordinance and other related issues, referencing what had been covered at the March 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. 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 the

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. Melso will be meeting with Councilwoman Cusick and Mayor Dillon; Mr. Geist would like to sit in on that meeting. The ordinance could be changed so that the tree cutter rather than the resident would get the summons. The licensing procedure for landscapers and tree cutters needs to be clarified and tightened to protect the homeowner. As Mr. Geist noted, if there is an ordinance, the police chief, borough administrator, and the governing body would need to work together to have it enforced by the police, the Zoning Officer, and/or the Code Enforcement Officer. An ordinance can be stricter than the state laws, but not less strict. Ordinances are the laws of the borough.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Martone shared information about a situation at between adjacent homeowners at Manor Drive and Joshua Drive. It was determined that the issue regarding overhanging branches of an oak tree is not a Shade Tree matter but rather something which needs to be worked out between the neighbors.

Ms. Cusick shared that the budget was approved; \$175,750 is the proposed amount for the Shade Tree budget. A way will be found to finance the removal of the ash trees. She attended the Environmental Commission's annual clean-up day on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. She picked up a copy of Shade Tree's "Did You Know?" fact sheet. That fact sheet was Shade Tree's *Ramsey Journal* submission. She noted that Mr. Trouf was called a wonderful help and a credit to the borough in a recent Ramsey Moms posting.

### **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 8:28 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Beltramini, and carried unanimously.

