

**RAMSEY SHADE TREE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Ramsey Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Mr. Melso at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, July 20, 2023. Also present were Mr. Englishman, Ms. Geist, Mr. Gubala, Mr. Martone, Mr. Rutkowski, Commission members, Mr. Geist, Board Attorney, Ms. Cusick, Council Liaison, Mr. Trouf, Coordinator, and Mrs. Dey, Secretary. Mr. Beltramini, Mr. McMahon, and Mr. Schumacher 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 Wednesday, December 7, 2022 and the RIDGEWOOD NEWS on Friday, December 9, 2022.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Melso led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Englishman, the minutes of the June 15, 2023 meeting were unanimously accepted as received.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Englishman noted that there needs to be weeding and mulching on Main Street. Mr. Martone also noted that the grate by the accident site on Main Street in front of Apolo Jewelers needs to be flush with the sidewalk.

Mr. Melso asked for a moment of silence in memory of Harry Smith, former Shade Tree Coordinator, who passed away recently.

There were spotted lanternfly traps which were picked up from the county. They need to be used on trees which are larger than eight inches. The emerald ash borer and the beech leaf disease are also of concern.

Mr. Melso was present at the New Resident Mixer on Tuesday, June 20th, at the pool. He distributed a handout with information taken from the recent newsletter.

COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Councilwoman Cusick reviewed the two ordinances which she introduced for consideration at the Wednesday, June 14th work session meeting of the governing body, Ordinance 6-2023 (Amending Chapter 20-3.12 of the Borough Shade Tree Code Substitutions) and Ordinance 7-2023 (Amending Chapter 20-5.13 of the Borough Shade Tree Code Replacement and Treatment of Trees Removed or Damaged in Violation of

this Section). Regarding 6-2023, the previous condition was that there was no allowance for stone as groundcover for commercial applications. This ordinance adds in the ability for the use of stone as groundcover in commercial landscaping applications with approval of the Shade Tree Commission. Review would be on a project-by-project basis. The ordinance also provides guidance on types of stone and the types of applications where stone may be an acceptable substitution subject to Shade Tree review and approval. Regarding 7-2023, this is an amendment to an existing ordinance. The previous language had only the owner responsible to replace the trees in the event of a violation and a need to replace trees removed in violation of the code. The new language, in addition to owner, adds the contractor, landscaper, and tree removal service to the code. This will facilitate replacement of trees taken down in violation but also aid property owners who may have hired a contractor who violated the tree removal process but then attempted to push replacement on the property owner as responsible under the old language. Both ordinances were approved at the Wednesday, June 28th meeting of the governing body.

She asked how many spotted lanternfly traps were left. Two are left and need to be used on larger trees, larger than eight inches.

She was also asked about the Chick-fil-A application before the Planning Board. They have withdrawn their application.

COMMUNICATIONS

Planning Board-June 6, 2023

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

12 Knollwood Drive, Block 2202, Lot 32.01

Mr. Martone and Mr. McMahon walked the property. The initial request was for the removal of twenty-eight trees, which they reduced to twenty trees. The trees have either beech leaf disease or root rot. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Gubala, the removal of twenty trees was unanimously approved.

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW-None**TREE REMOVAL PERMIT VIOLATIONS****LANDSCAPING PLAN REVIEW****14 Mechanic Street, Block 4902, Lot 10 (Mechanic Real Estate LLC)**

Thomas Ashbahian, 39 Spring Street, and one of the part owners were present to explain the landscaping plan for the site. The project has been approved by the Planning Board. There will be four rental units. Several modifications to the submitted plan were made, including 2 ½ to 3 caliper inch little leaf lindens instead of the blue spruce in the front, a skip laurel border with six trees, and three 2 ½ to 3 caliper inch October Glory maples instead of the proposed pin oaks. There will be staggered Green Giant arborvitae in a bed to provide screening. A Quonset cherry was proposed as a corner accent piece, instead of a pin oak. Only one tree is coming out. The plan is more than conforming. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Gubala, the amended plan was unanimously approved, subject to submission of three copies of the revised plan.

	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			

54 North Franklin Turnpike, Block 4703, Lot 1.1

John Pjeternikaj, 190 Main Street, Suite 201, Hackensack, property manager and owner of the property on North Franklin Turnpike, was present. It had been ascertained by Mr. Gubala that eleven trees were taken down. Pine Hill Tree Service had indicated that they would take care of getting the necessary permit, which they did not do. Mr. Pjeternikaj stated that of the trees that were taken down four trees were rotted/diseased and two were dead. He had submitted a tree replacement plan with four 3 ½ to 4 caliper inch trees slated for planting. There is an existing row of hedges, and the first round of seeding is done. Since there has been an effort to rectify the situation, Mr. Martone indicated that he would be in favor of plan approval. The trees, which will be planted in October, will need deer barriers, gator bags, and stakes for a year. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Gubala, the new plan was unanimously approved.

	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 curbs must be marked, and there must be a decision about what to do with the stumps. Mr. Trouf also included the tree work which is being done by DPW. It was noted that they are doing an excellent job for the borough. Chris Fix is working on work order #6.

Work order #6

42 New Street-Two trees will be elevated, and one small root above grade will be removed.

146 Sherwood Drive-The tree will be removed.

24 Carriage Lane-The tree will be trimmed.

9 New England Drive-The tree will be removed.

80 Maple Street (behind)-Three dead pine trees will be removed.

345 Elbert Street-The tree will be removed.

12 Pinetree Road-Two trees will be elevated.

4 Vaughn Drive-The trees will be trimmed.

7 Vaughn Drive-The trees will be trimmed.

16 Vaughn Drive-The tree will be removed.

193 Myrtle Street (Vaughn Drive side)-The tree will be trimmed.

68 Bedford Place-The tree will be removed.

537 North Central Avenue (Myrtle Street side)-The tree will be removed.

Finch Park (Gazebo)-The tree will be removed.

7 Valley View Drive-Three trees will be elevated, and dead wood will be removed.

8 Valley View Drive-One tree will be elevated, and dead wood will be removed.

9 Valley View Drive-Three trees will be elevated, and dead wood will be removed.

7 Lancaster Court-Four trees will be removed.

96 Nottingham Road-Dead wood will be removed.

160 Deer Trail North-One maple will be pruned and elevated.

156 Deer Trail North-Two maples will be removed.

60 East Crescent Avenue-The branch hanging over the service wire will be trimmed.

201 Heather Lane-The tree will be removed.

Work order #7

161 Ramview Avenue-The tree will be removed.

148 Deer Trail North-The tree will be removed.

DPW Tree Work #3

9 Allison Way (borough property)-The dead tree will be pulled out.

21 Roandis Court-The tree will be removed.

31 North Island Avenue-The branches will be trimmed back from the sidewalk.

267 Davidson Avenue-The tree will be elevated.

Spring Street Overpass (south side)-The low hanging branches will be trimmed.

10 Buckingham Drive-The hanging branch will be removed.

83 Momar Drive-The tree will be removed.

COMMERCIAL SITE INSPECTIONS

Mr. Melso reminded the Commissioners to keep an eye on the commercial properties in their zones, especially on Route 17.

Regarding **The Store on Main Street, Block 4903, Lot 7**, Tony DeBenedetto and AJ DeBenedetto were present to discuss their landscaping plan. Mr. Melso recused himself. They apologized for the delay. The property has been cleaned up, and the irrigation problem has been fixed. There is a soaker hose on the property. The spirea on the plan will be replaced by boxwoods with three to four azaleas on each side which will essentially be a baby horseshoe with color. Upon motion by Mr. Englishman, seconded by Mr. Gubala, all amendments to the plan were unanimously approved. They must revise their plan, including the final number of boxwoods, and resubmit. It was also noted that there are two garbage containers on the property which do not belong to The Store which are rusty and unattractive. Mr. Trouf will check those containers.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Regarding **900A Route 17N (Brothers Barbeque)**, the closing took place. The full amount for the landscaping and irrigation, \$37,423.67, will be put in escrow.

Regarding **69, 87, and 99 Spring Street**, the check for \$7,500 has not yet been received since the language (settlement, not donation) is not acceptable to Ramsey Auto Group. Mr. Geist will follow up again.

Mr. Englishman asked about the red oak in front of **14-18 North Spruce Street** from the June meeting. Mr. Milde will be asked to check out the tree.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding **105 Park Street**, Mr. Melso looked at the two sugar maples and asked Mr. Milde to also look at the trees which are large trees, more than eighteen caliper inches. Following discussion, it was decided to take out the dead wood and inspect the trees annually.

Regarding CEUs, Mr. Milde will conduct an arborist class in Ramsey sometime in September or October for at least five Commissioners. Councilwoman Cusick would also like to be included in the class.

Councilwoman Cusick asked that someone look at 403 South Central Avenue regarding the spotted lanternfly. She also asked if the letters about the emerald ash borer were sent to residents. Mr. Trouf indicated that they had been sent.

Mr. Melso asked about the current status of the grant for the tree inventory. It was noted that Ridgewood has contracted with a company to complete an inventory. The grant money is still available.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Melso announced that the Public Comment portion of the meeting, beginning at 8:37 p.m., would last approximately five minutes per person.

Allan Braggin, 25 Franklin Street, was present with questions about 16 Hubbard School Lane. Going back approximately fifteen years, the owner of the Hubbard School Lane property took down an unspecified number of trees without a permit. He was fined \$25,000 and told to plant replacement trees. No fine was paid, and no trees were planted. At the time, the area was designated a protected, no-cut buffer zone. Recently, a different owner took down as many as six trees; Top Notch did the tree removal work. Mr. Braggin is looking for information about what was to be a protected, no-cut buffer zone. Borough Engineer D'Agostaro had asked if that designation was memorialized by the Planning Board. Mr. Trouf has looked for information but was unable to find any pertinent information. Before the Shade Tree Commission can provide any answers for Mr. Braggin, further research must be done. Mr. Geist will also look into the issue.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Gubala, seconded by Mr. Rutkowski, and carried unanimously.

