

**RAMSEY SHADE TREE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Ramsey Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Mr. Melso at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, August 17, 2023. Also present were Mr. Beltramini, Mr. Englishman, Ms. Geist, Mr. Martone, Mr. McMahon, Mr. Rutkowski, Mr. Schumacher, Commission members, Mr. Geist, Board Attorney, Mr. Trouf, Coordinator, and Mrs. Dey, Secretary. Mr. Gubala and Ms. Cusick, Council Liaison, 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. Beltramini, the minutes of the July 20, 2023 meeting were unanimously accepted as received.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. McMahon noted that there still are a lot of standing dead ash trees which need to be considered for the next budget.

Mr. Melso read a letter which had been sent to Mr. Krawczyk from Rich Mammone, Zoning Officer, dated October 4, 2007, regarding a buffer zone at the Hubbard Lane property.

COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Councilwoman Cusick was not in attendance, but she e-mailed a report. At the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, July 18th, there were three waivers and no public hearings. Chick-Fil-A has pulled their application. Upcoming events include Ramsey Day on Saturday, September 9th, the Monday 9/11 Observance, and the Ramsey Run on Saturday, September 30th.

COMMUNICATIONS

Zoning Board of Adjustment-May 17, 2023

Planning Board-June 20, 2023

A Pine Street/Alder Drive minor subdivision was approved. Regarding Mitsubishi on Route 17, the landscape coverage was reduced.

TREE REMOVAL APPLICATIONS**20 Knollwood Drive, Block 2202, Lot 32.03**

Mr. Martone and Mr. McMahon walked the property. There are a lot of dead and dying beech trees and one other tree with root rot. Twelve or thirteen trees will be removed. There are a lot of trees on the property so the removed trees will not be replaced. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Beltramini, the removal of twelve or thirteen 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				

2 Valley View Drive, Block 2601, Lot 26

Mr. Martone and Mr. McMahon walked the property. This is a Len DiTomaso project, with a complete landscape plan. Eighteen to twenty-one trees will be removed. Hopefully, three cherry trees can be saved. Upon Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Englishman, the removal of eighteen to twenty-one 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				

SITE PLAN REVIEW-None

TREE REMOVAL PERMIT VIOLATIONS-None

LANDSCAPING PLAN REVIEW

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. It is expected that money may run out in November. Probably over six hundred ash trees have been removed in the borough.

Work order #7

161 Ramview Avenue-The tree will be removed.

148 Deer Trail North-The tree will be removed.

92 Oakridge Road-The stump will be ground.

14-18 North Spruce Street-Dead wood will be removed.

105 Park Street-Dead wood will be trimmed from two trees.

108 East Oak Street-The tree will be dropped. The stump will be left, with no need to chip.

34 Elm Avenue-One maple tree will be cabled and pruned.

28 Elm Avenue-One oak will be pruned.

96 Elm Avenue-One tree will be dropped in the woods and the stump will be left. Dead wood will be pruned from the oak trees adjacent to the property that poses a safety issue.

10 New England Drive-The tree will be removed.

2 Collette Drive (Grove Street side)-The tree will be removed.

384 Elbert Street-Two small limbs that are hanging over Park Street will be elevated.

75 East Oak Street (Ramsey pool)-Three oaks will be trimmed.

31 North Island Avenue-The tree will be elevated.

100 Buckingham Drive-Dead wood will be trimmed on two trees.

21 Forest Avenue-The tree will be elevated.

289 Elizabeth Avenue-The tree will be removed.

45 Buckingham Drive-The branch over the driveway and wire will be trimmed.

297 Elizabeth Avenue-Two trees will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

2 Valley View Drive-Two trees will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

4 Valley View Drive-One tree will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

5 Valley View Drive-Three trees will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

134 Snyder Avenue-The dead limb hanging over the roadway will be trimmed.

128 Snyder Avenue-The tree will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

38 School Street-The tree will be elevated, and dead wood will be trimmed.

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.

82 Cherry Lane-The tree will be elevated.

34 Linden Street-The tree will be removed, with Rockland Electric.

56 Eton Court-The tree will be removed, with Rockland Electric.

8 Elbert Street-The tree will be removed, with Rockland Electric.

70 Canterbury Avenue-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 was present to discuss the revised landscaping plan. Mr. Melso again recused himself. The property has been cleaned up, and the irrigation problem will be fixed. There is a soaker hose on the property. The spirea on the plan were replaced by boxwoods. Since there are ten existing evergreens, there is only space for one azalea on each side. He would like to start the project as soon as it is approved. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. McMahon, the revised plan 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			

OLD BUSINESS

Regarding **69, 87, and 99 Spring Street**, the check for \$7,500 has not yet been received since the language (settlement/fine, not donation) is not acceptable to Ramsey Auto Group. Therefore, payment was rejected based on terminology. Through discussion, it was noted that accepting the payment as a donation sets a precedent. Mr. Geist has now been ignored for several months. Mr. Jaworski did admit publicly that the property had been clear-cut. The Harlind Acres issue was mentioned. Upon motion by Mr. Martone, seconded by Mr. Melso, the Shade Tree Commission unanimously recommended that a summons be issued to Ramsey Auto Group for the removal of an excessive number of trees for the payment of the full amount, based upon the borough code. Mr. Trouf indicated that the governing body would not be in favor of this action. He further stated that he will not write the summons if Borough Administrator Vozech and the mayor tell him not to.

	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				

NEW BUSINESS

The Shade Tree Commission received a \$15,000 grant for any actions done on borough property to eliminate the spotted lanternfly in the borough by the end of 2023. More traps should be available from the county. A vinegar spray had been used by DPW on the bikepath. Vinegar does kill vegetation. Someone with the appropriate license would need to use anything with chemicals. It had earlier been suggested that information about remedies for handling the spotted lanternfly, such as wire brushes, sprays, traps, and so on, be developed by Mr. Martone and Mr. McMahon for inclusion on the borough website. Colin Milde had submitted an estimate for spraying the bikepath. There was a discussion about where to look for the swarms of spotted lanternflies. The Commissioners will walk throughout the borough to identify where the lanternflies are in Ramsey. The bikepath appears to be a hot spot.

Regarding CEUs, Mr. Milde will conduct an arborist class in Ramsey sometime in September or October for at least five Commissioners. Walking the bikepath was suggested as a possibility.

Mr. Trouf noted that the letters about the emerald ash borer had been sent to residents. Mr. Martone observed that there has not been a response from some residents. He asked if a stronger letter should be sent. Mr. Geist will look at the initial letter to ascertain what could be added to it. The Commissioners should continue to alert Mr. Trouf about any ash trees.

Mr. McMahon noted that OEM should have a liaison/contact person from the Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Englishman offered to serve as the liaison.

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. Continuing from the July meeting, Mr. Braggin reviewed information going back approximately fifteen years. At that time, 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, although there had been a plan. Mr. Braggin stated that at the time the area was designated a protected, no-cut buffer zone. The letter which had been read by Mr. Melso earlier in the meeting addressed that buffer zone by the Planning Board, not the Shade Tree Commission. He asked what was in Shade Tree records because it was a Shade Tree issue, not a Planning Board issue. As time ran out, he closed his comments with a mention of controlling the gypsy moth from many years ago.

ADJOURNMENT

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

