

**LOPATCONG TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION
REORGANIZATION AND REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 12, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER BY: Chairman Bichler

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT: “adequate notice of this meeting has been provided indicating the time and place of the meeting in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 by advertising a Notice in The Star Gazette and The Express-Times and by posting a copy on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building”.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Members, Correa, Rozycki and Vice-Chairman Camporine, Chairman Bichler; Council Liaison Lori Ciesla

OLD BUSINESS:

- Approve the February 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Vice-Chairman Camporine

Seconded by: Member Cieslla

ROLL CALL:

Present: Members, Correa, Rozycki and Vice-Chairman Camporine, Chairman Bichler and Council Liaison Lori Ciesla

NEW BUSINESS:

- Discuss Forest Management Plan with Joe Bruschetta

Mr. Bruschetta will be writing the Forest Management Plan for the Shade Tree Commission. Member Rozycki questioned whether or not the Commission could follow the current plan and update it for this year. Mr. Bruschetta told her no, because there are new standards and requirements that are a little different. The procedure needs to reflect what you’ve accomplished, what you didn’t accomplish and what you hope to accomplish; this is in Section 2 and Section 10. There will have to be more synchronicity to plaintive. One of the recommendations is that they have goals, but making these goals so that you can accomplish them. An example is you have 13 goals but you can’t accomplish them, or having 2 or 3 goals that you can accomplish in the time frame that you set up. Some changes that will be coming, they want a little less boiler-plate, as far as your accomplishments and goals go. Mr. Bruschetta stated you have goals and you have objectives, but are they achievable. He questioned the Commission if they had an inventory done yet? Chairman Bichler said, “No.”. Mr. Bruschetta said that if he remembered correctly that it was in the previous plan. Council Liaison said that there was. He said it is important that they give their goals and a time frame to complete their accomplishments. Mr. Bruschetta spoke about the budget, he stated that volunteer time is also a budget allotment; it has a

value that is assigned every year, approx. \$18.61. Mr. Bruschetta wanted to know where the \$32,000.00 came from and Chairman Bichler said it was the DPW. Council Liaison Ciesla said they had gotten a grant for \$3,000.00, that was good until April, 2016, and according to the grant papers, they have to use it for our Forestry Management Plan. If they don't use it for that, they will have to give the grant back.

Member Rozycki wanted to know if they have to utilize that money for plans. Mr. Bruschetta and Council Liaison Ciesla both told her yes. She wanted to know if they could create the plan themselves and Mr. Bruschetta told her, "No". Mr. Bruschetta told her it was only 50%, but some of that could be in-kind services and whatever the difference is. Mr. Bruschetta told Member Rozycki it is a matching grant, the grant is up to \$3,000.00 and the Township has to match it, but it doesn't have to be in actual cash, it can be in in-kind and the time the DPW spends doing things; Arbor day, time at meetings, you have to come up with \$1,500.00 in in-kind time.

Mr. Bruschetta stated that as a forester and a consultant, they have to look at him as a lens. It isn't his plan; it is their plan and the community. They want the plan to be more than just a document that sits on the shelf.

Member Rozycki said that, "As a member, not many of these goals were accomplished, why have a plan, why have a Shade Tree Commission; that they should just do what they can do".

Mr. Bruschetta stated that the number one reason they want the Shade Tree Commission, is your freedom from liability. Also that you are actively involved in the community, trees, the values of the trees; they help with healing, cleaning the air and water.

Mr. Bruschetta talked about the standards of planting new trees; that they have to have single leaders in the seedlings because there is less chance of them failing in the future. He said that most of the trees that the branches are at a 45 degree angle are 2.8 times weaker than branch at a 90 degree angle. During storms, the trees that the tops are broken, the majority are 45 degrees or greater. If you get new trees from the nursery and it doesn't have the single leader, you send it back or do some corrective pruning when you first plant it. That way the breakage could have been avoided by storms or ice. He said if you spend a little more now, it will save more in the long run. (i.e. overtime, etc.)

Member Rozycki wanted to know if they were going to use the meeting to go over the Forestry Management Plan since they all had a copy to go over before the meeting. She was told to do it at a later time. Mr. Bruschetta told them to write their goals and accomplishments down. Member Rozycki wanted to know if the plan Mr. Bruschetta developed, is it considered a Best Practice. Mr. Bruschetta told her there is no such thing as a "good plan"; a good plan is how you accomplish it. He said to be realistic about the plan. He gave them some suggestions for their goals; to check their ordinance, do they have a tree list, tree replacement policy, open space, etc. He would like them to all sit down individually and come up with a list, then they can pick through it and see what goes together, what is reasonable, what is accomplishable, what are they doing for public outreach?

There should be an accomplishment plan every year. Mr. Bruschetta asked if we had accomplishment plans and Chairman Bichler told him he didn't know where the past years are. He said they are somewhere, he just doesn't know where. For public outreach, Mr. Bruschetta said they can work with local schools or outgoing articles to the community, (i.e. Arbor Day, public plantings, etc.). Mr. Bruschetta asked if they are keeping up with their CEU's. Council Liaison Ciesla asked if there was another town similar to ours that they could look at their plan to get an idea how to do ours. Mr.

Bruschetta told them Belvidere was similar. The time frame to get the plan done is by the end of the year, however, right now we are functioning without a plan because ours expired; we are not in approved status. Council Liaison Ciesla stated they should make this a priority to do it as soon as possible to get us back in approved status.

Mr. Bruschetta would like at \$1,500.00 on the plan, and then he will start working on it, he will officially start working on it once he gets the approved status from the state, that is the first step. Then when the plan is done, that is when he will get paid the balance; the total is \$4,500.00. He said you would have to come up with the \$1,500.00 in in-kind service, which Council Liaison Ciesla said they can definitely do.

Member Rozycki wanted to know if we had to do the plan to get the approved status. Council Liaison Ciesla said that yes they do have to do the plan first, but they were already approved for the grant. They need \$1,500.00 in cash, \$3,000.00 in grant money and another \$1,500 in in-kinds.

Mr. Bruschetta wanted to know who the residents call if they are having a problem with a tree and he was told the Clerk's Office, then that office calls the DPW.

Vice-Chairman Camporine stated we should have an inspector. Mr. Bruschetta said it could be anyone on the Committee as long as they are Core Trained; they would have the authorization to inspect the tree. Mr. Bruschetta wanted to know if we have done a hazardous tree inspection. Chairman Bichler stated that the DPW does it once-in-awhile when they are out on the road. Mr. Bruschetta stated they could be more proactive and he will recommend that at least once a year they have a hazardous tree inspection or after a severe storm incident, even if it is a drive-by, windshield survey, to foresee any issues.

Mr. Bruschetta said, "That when you do tree plantings, you have to think of the life of the tree. You may have to replace them. Tree selection, what trees do you pick? Why do we pick those trees? Why are we going to recommend these trees?" Mr. Bruschetta stated what selection of trees is typically better than others. Council Liaison Ciesla said that could be put on the website because people plant trees, not fully thinking it through, not realizing what that tree is going to be like 20 years from now. Member Rozycki also said that maybe they could do that through a partnership with our local nurseries; it advertises their business and highlights our resident education.

Mr. Bruschetta said that "The key is how well you manage your resources. The state understands that budgets are limited, that you're not going to be able to address every single thing, you're not going to be able to identify every hazard tree, but you have a mechanism set up for that. You're outlining it, you're quantifying it, qualifying it and that is what the plan is really all about". His job is to take the Committee's ideas, focus them in and get them on paper, get them into a format that follows the certain guidelines that the state has and to help the Commission; to better manage and point out things to proceed a different way.

Mr. Bruschetta wanted to know if we had any community involvement. Council Liaison Ciesla and Member Rozycki said that we have Community Day, Easter Egg Hunt and they could probably utilize the schools as well. Mr. Bruschetta suggested memorial tree plantings and things like that. Member Rozycki stated that we have a new Environmental Commission and that they could work with them as well. Mr. Bruschetta agreed.

Mr. Bruschetta said that another tie-in is how you are tied in with the National Corp; it is important, the time, the plan, in with the National Corp. – Open Space. Mr. Bruschetta said trees don't have to be planted on streets, they could be planted on stream beds, etc., blue ways, green ways.

Member Rozycki asked Mr. Bruschetta that after they get their plan together, could he do a visual assessment of the town to direct them as to what they should prioritize as their first need, and to prioritize their goals as well; that if he sees a lot of diseased trees, maybe that should be their first priority. Mr. Bruschetta said they could work on that. He said another very important thing is with all the diseases today, the big push is bio-diversity, not planting the same tree. Mr. Bruschetta said that you shouldn't plant a whole street with one type of tree, to intermix them with other trees. He recommends Black Gum. He gave an example as to plant the Black Gum because it is a very strong tree, beautiful red foliage in fall and intermix with Ornamental Apple, every other tree. The Ornamental Apple Trees have beautiful flowers on the trees in the spring and summertime all the foliage will all be green. You can control that. If you lose a tree, you can't think of it as a loss, you have to think of it as a planting opportunity.

Member Rozycki questioned mulching. Mr. Bruschetta said there are standards. You cannot make mounds of mulch around the trees. You want dirt 8" away from the trunk, at least. Member Rozycki wanted to know if that was supposed to be in their plan and Mrs. Bruschetta said they could set it up as a standard, guidelines. Member Rozycki asked where they could find the acceptable guidelines and Mr. Bruschetta said at the American Society of Arbor Culturists, but they could call to the Federation in Rutgers, they will provide you with them. If they can't find it there, he will look for his copy for them.

For the next meeting, the members are going to make a list of goals and accomplishments and combine them into one list and go over the ones they want on the plan.

Mr. Bruschetta asked if we had the Tree City status. Council Liaison Ciesla said she didn't know; that she would look into that for the next meeting. One of their requirements is that plan is approved. Mr. Bruschetta made another suggestion concerning Sustainable New Jersey. They also have grant money, one of the things to get the money is the status guide has to be approved. He said there is money out there besides the community grant. There are grants for tree planting, etc. He said to get support from the public and to get them involved in plantings. He said that replacing trees that are diseased or ready to come down now for \$10.00 each is better than waiting until there is a storm and end up paying \$1,000.00 a tree, with O.T. and whatever else. You can make your case that way to the Town Council.

Member Rozycki asked if there was a time limit as to when to get this plan done and if Mr. Bruschetta has to be at the next meeting or can they email it to him. He said he doesn't need to be there so they will email him their goals and accomplishments.

Joe's email address is: vrusc@eclipse.net
Joe's cell phone # is: 908 528-4576

Council Liaison Ciesla said she would put forth a resolution for the next meeting to hire Joseph Bruschetta to write our Forestry Management Plan. Member Rozycki asked if we get a contract from him for his services. Council Liaison Ciesla said she would talk to Lorraine, our CFO, to find out what he is going to send to us. Council Liaison Ciesla and Chairman Bichler said it sounds to them like he charges a flat fee, but they will find out.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discuss Salary for Secretary - \$2,500.00**

There was a discussion to pay the secretary the salary of \$2,500.00.

Council Liaison Ciesla stated that last year Councilwoman Schneider didn't know if she wanted to continue with the Shade Tree Commission, so the salary wasn't approved. Upon the investigation of our attorney, they thought that since we did have a Shade Tree Commission, we should keep it. The cost for keeping this committee going is far less than one liability issue that we might have. Member Rozycki said she spoke with Juniper Leifer on the Environmental Commission and they assigned a secretary. Member Rozycki did not want to pay the secretary as they want to save money and said it is nothing personal. Member Rozycki said the responsibility of the secretary is to type up the minutes, insure the agenda is sent out, appropriate copies are made. Council Liaison Ciesla said the secretary has to handle any of the correspondence, etc. Council Liaison Ciesla said they could assign a secretary at a volunteer level. Vice-Chairman Camporine wanted Secretary Coleman to remain the secretary because she is secretary to several boards and she knows what to do and would also be working at her job should questions arise and she could handle them. Member Rozycki, again, said that she didn't want to pay. She volunteered to be the secretary.

Motion to Nominate Member Rozycki as Board Secretary.

Motion by: Lisa Correa

Seconded by: Vice-Chairman Camporine

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Members, Correa, Rozycki, Vice-Chairman Camporine and Chairman Bichler

NAYS: None

Council Liaison Ciesla told Member Rozycki to get in touch with Mr. Bruschetta to let him know that she is now the secretary and to let him know that Ms. Ciesla is the backup and to give him their phone numbers and email addresses.

- **Discuss CEU's and Core Training**

Council Liaison Ciesla said that she didn't get a response to her email, but that she recommended that they be Core Trained. There is money in the budget for that. She wanted to ask Mr. Bruschetta if you can earn CEU's before you are Core Trained and she didn't get the question to him. Member Rozycki and Chairman Bichler both said you can.

They would like to have someone come here for the CEU training in one lump sum and possibly invite other towns to share with the cost. Vice-Chairman Camporine said that not a lot of towns have a Shade Tree Commission. Ms. Ciesla said that a lot of them do not, but it is good for us to have one because of our park. Member Rozycki asked how she is to get paperwork to Chairman Bichler and he said to drop it off to Phyllis Coleman in the Clerk's Office and she would get in touch with him. Member Rozycki also said she would email me the things to give Chairman Bichler and Vice-Chairman Camporine and we will print it out for them.

Member Rozycki said she knows of two people that are interested in joining the Shade Tree Commission. Council Liaison Ciesla said that was okay, that they can have alternates. Council Liaison Ciesla said that right now we have two openings. Member Rozycki asked how many members there are and Council Liaison Ciesla said you have to have at least five members and no more than seven members, instead of three members and that it is a five year term. Council Liaison Ciesla said that is the only change that makes the ordinance in line with the state. They are mayoral appointments only, there is no need for council consent and that also has to change so that it is line with the state statute; the state statutes override us. Member Rozycki told the mayor she has two names and he told her to email them to him. Council Liaison asked who was interested and Member Rozycki said that it was Christy Victor and Janet Kline. Council Liaison Ciesla will introduce the ordinance on March 18th, at the Council Meeting, and the 2nd Reading will probably be in May. Council Liaison asked them Commission to think about staggering their terms; she will send them an email with those terms and they will have to decide who wants what term. The state says five years and if they don't want to do five years, they can always resign. The state doesn't want a whole commission to wipe out at the same time with their terms, thus the reason for staggering terms. Council Liaison Ciesla explained to the Commission how to stagger the terms.

- **Discuss Super-Storm Sandy Tree Replacement Program**

Council Liaison Ciesla said we can get up to 2,000 tree seedlings and they have to apply by the next day to get them. They have to specify how many seedlings they want and fax the form. Member Rozycki ask when the pickup was and Council Liaison Ciesla said it was April 17th, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, in Hackettstown. Member Rozycki asked Chairman Bichler if we have any place to store them and Chairman Bichler said that he didn't. Last year they were at the pavilion, to be given out at the Easter Egg Hunt. Earth Day is April 22nd and Arbor Day is April 24th. Council Liaison Ciesla said, "They may want to reach out to Juniper Leifer and see if she wants to jump in on this if she wants to organize something". Council Liaison Ciesla also said it could be a joint endeavor between the Shade Tree Commission and the Environmental Commission. Member Rozycki said it is only as good as the advertising to the public. Council Liaison Ciesla's idea is to hand the trees out to all the kids in school or have an event with the Perfect Christmas Tree Farm. Vice-Chairman Camporine thinks the school is a great idea. Member Rozycki said that she would check with the Juniper and Rainie to see if they would want to participate. Council Liaison Ciesla said she would sign the form that has to be faxed and then Member Rozycki can contact Phyllis in the clerk's office with the amount of seedlings they need and the event, in order to fax the form.

- **Review of Roles and Responsibilities**

Member Rozycki said all the members will help implement the plan and they have to be mindful of when they devise their goals and objectives to seriously think about how much time each member can commit. Council Liaison Ciesla said that don't set goals that are physically impossible to do. Member Rozycki asked Chairman Bichler, that his role as Chair, he sets the agenda and Chairman Bichler said that he did the report last year. Member Rozycki also wanted to know if Chairman Bichler was the contact person if there was an issue and Chairman Bichler said that he was. Council Liaison said the residents could either call the clerk's office or the DPW.

Member Rozycki asked Council Liaison Ciesla, that her role as the liaison is what? Council Liaison Ciesla said she was the voice between the Council and the Commission and also just there in her capacity as a

government official that she represents the governing body and she has no vote. Council Liaison Ciesla said it is just advice to keep the meetings flowing in the proper format and that kind of things. Vice-Chairman Camporine said that Council Liaison Ciesla could actually be a member as well, because he was. Member Rozycki said according to Robert's Rules, she doesn't think Council Liaison Ciesla can be a member as well, because she has to be an impartial person representing the council.

Vice-Chairman Camporine stated that he would like to resign on the Commission due to health issues with his wife. He would like to step down when the new members are sworn-in. Everyone on the Commission said they understood.

Vice-Chairman Camporine would like to see an island on Red School Lane with trees planted in the island to beautify the street. Vice-Chairman Camporine suggested to the Commission that they ask the large corporations to donate trees or money to get trees.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion by: Member Camporine

Seconded by: Member Rozycki

ALL IN FAVOR: Ayes

NAYS: None

Respectfully Submitted by:

Phyllis D. Coleman, Secretary

Chairman Joseph Bichler