

# MEETING MINUTES

Shade Tree Committee  
City Hall – 280 Grove Street, Jersey City NJ 07302  
Councilmember Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair

**Meeting:** Jersey City Shade Tree Committee Meeting

**Date / Location:** 22 February 2021 – 6:30 p.m.  
Videoconference remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:** **Voting Committee Members**  
Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair (arrived late)  
Denise Bailey  
David Hurtle  
Matthew Trump  
Theodore G. Tasoulas, Vice-Chair  
Marc Wesson

**Non-Voting Committee Members/City Representatives**  
Cameron Black, Senior Planner, Jersey City Division of Planning  
Edward O'Malley, Jersey City Forester  
Adam Cohen (arrived late), designee for Chair Prinz-Arey  
Kate Lawrence, Secretary

**Prepared By:** Kate Lawrence

## PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk's Office, the Jersey Journal, the Hudson Reporter, and el Especialito on February 17, 2021. The agenda was also posted on the website for the Office of Sustainability, <https://jcmakeitgreen.org>. Meeting dates for the remainder of 2021 were sent to the entities above on February 19, 2021. They were also posted to the Shade Tree Committee webpage of the City website and the general City calendar.

## ROLL CALL

The Committee meeting commenced at approximately 6:34PM. Five of six voting committee members were present at the beginning of the meeting. The remaining member, Chair Mira Prinz-Arey, arrived around 7 p.m.

## APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Motion made to accept January 2021 minutes
- Motion approved 4-1

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Member of the public made request for public comment at beginning instead of end.

- Discussion of the merits of this. Decision to keep as is for this meeting. Possibly make changes for future meetings.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Forestry Standards

- Updates from working meetings
  - There were two working meetings for Shade Tree Committee members since the last public meeting in order to go through potential edits to Forestry Standards.
  - Committee members went through Standards line by line. Have almost completed review of entire document.
  - All Committee members have access to the editable working document with all changes and comments in side bar.
  - Lots of little changes and clarifications have been agreed to so far. Some suggestions need to be explored further.
  - Concern raised – want to have a public discussion about all proposed changes.
    - Not enough time – lots of extra meetings. No desire to rehash previous discussions.
    - All final changes will still be discussed during public Shade Tree Committee meeting.
  - Decision to continue editing from where working group left off.
- Continuing with document edits
  - Page 21 – Forester added language regarding valuation of trees.
  - Increased cost for “in lieu of” payment to \$1,000 from \$500.
  - Question raised – can we incorporate eco-benefits into calculation of value of tree?
    - Not recommended – how would we do that calculus? Forester recommends industry standard, trunk formula method. Used by ISA and NYC. Defensible in court.
  - Suggestion to increase maintenance period from 2 years to 3 years.
    - Not recommended. Standard is 2 years. Would lead to less bids on contracts.
    - City only recently (within past 3 years) instituted 2-year maintenance period. Before that there was no maintenance period at all. It is difficult for the City to enforce 2-year period as it is.
  - Tree Protection standards
    - Requirements already exist to protect street trees during construction. However, they do not seem to be enforced. How to change this?
    - Need to include requirement language on planning applications, zoning applications, and permit applications.
  - What is process for developers looking to remove trees for new development?
    - Process is not as rigorous for Zoning as it is for Planning. Technically, all tree removals require permit approved by Forester.
    - Once Forestry Standards are updated, Zoning should be reminded of what the rules are.
  - Measurements regarding room needed for new trees adjusted for consistency throughout document.

- Bioswales section – remove language referencing Parks & Forestry and Sustainability so that is consistent with current practice.
  - Question raised – why aren't bioswales always required as part of new tree plantings?
  - Answer – bioswales are option for green infrastructure requirements in Flood Overlay Zone. Planning and Sustainability are interested in expanding green infrastructure requirements from Flood Overlay Zone to entire city.
    - Adding bioswales incurs an extra cost.
    - Planning would need to be involved if there was requirement for green infrastructure for all tree pits.
- Historic section – why is Zelkova the only species? Is bluestone storage happening?
  - Recommendations from Historic Preservation. Need to confirm any changes with Historic Preservation.
- Concern raised about removal of suggested Maintenance section.
  - Counter-concern that private requirements for maintenance should not be included in Forestry Standards
  - Discussion of how this section was added to try and avoid the maintenance gray area that arose in Society Hill regarding the trees along the walkway. Concern regarding making sure developers properly maintain trees.
  - There is need for additional language somewhere in City code to address this issue but this is likely not the place.
  - Requirements can be referenced in Forestry Standards. Need to discuss with Planning and Legal.
  - Conclusion – change section from deleted to “need to revisit.”

## PUBLIC COMMENT

- Reni Stoll spoke about the need for enforcing and simplifying the Forestry Standards and thanked the Forester for his work.
- Camille Cesari asked about repercussions for people illegally removing tree and said Forestry Standards should be in ordinance.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

- Acknowledgement that Jersey City has made a lot of progress in past two years regarding tree planting and maintenance.
- Secretary Lawrence responded to questions regarding Davey contract
  - Question: What are Davey Tree contract deliverables? Which trees will be inventoried?
    - Answer: An inventory for street trees. Future contracts will complete street trees and may also include parks. The inventory will not include private trees
  - Question: Who will own the data?

- Answer: The City will own the data
  - Question: Will data be made public?
    - Answer: Most of the data will be made public. The format is still being finalized.
  - Question: What other vendors were vetted?
    - Answer: Arbor Pro
  - Question: Was there an RFP process?
    - Answer: There wasn't a formal contract because the amount was under \$17,500. The purchase went through the regular purchasing process for expenditures of that size.
  - Question: What was the price of the contract?
    - Answer: Less than \$17,500. If you want more information about the contract you can contact the City's Purchasing Division.
  - Question: Will a hazard assessment be included in the inventory?
    - Answer: Yes
  - Question: What does the City plan to do with the hazard assessment?
    - Answer: Make decisions about which trees need to be prioritized for trimming or removal.
  - Question: How will the work of professional consultants such as Davey be used in policy decisions by the City?
    - Answer: Having accurate data allows the Forester and other staff make informed decision about future plantings and maintenance.
- Discussion regarding changing timing of public comment in future meetings – should it be at beginning or at end?
  - Question raised – will adding it to beginning make it so long that it derails meeting?
  - Suggestion made that Committee could try having comment period at beginning of meeting.
  - Concern raised that comments meander and take away from bulk of meeting.
  - Suggestion that having comments at beginning of meeting would be helpful when voting on items.
  - Suggestion made to wrap up Forestry Standards and then try switching public comments to beginning.
- Question raised – is there vehicle for engaging public in between meetings?
  - Suggestion made to add incognito form to webpage
- Are changes to Shade Tree Ordinance, Chapter 321, now in effect?
  - Yes. The Chair will download official copy and send around to the Committee.
- Have interim meeting to discuss Forestry Standards comments before next meeting?
  - John McKinney will follow up regarding potentially setting up another interim meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting; seconded and approved unanimously at 8:31 p.m.

## Next Meeting

# Meeting Minutes

Jersey City Shade Tree Committee Meeting:  
**22 February 2021 – 6:30 p.m.**

Page 5 of 5

---

The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 15, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be held remotely as a videoconference. Virtual access information will be distributed before the meeting. All other meetings in 2021 will be held on the third Monday of each month.