

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: 15 March 2021 – 6:30 p.m.
Videoconference remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

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

Non-Voting Committee Members/City Representatives
Cameron Black, Senior Planner, Jersey City Division of Planning
John McKinney, Jersey City Department of Law
Edward O'Malley, Jersey City Forester
Carolina Ramos

Prepared By: Carolina Ramos

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk's Office, the Jersey Journal, the Hudson Reporter, and el Especialito on March 10, 2021. The agenda was also posted on the website for the Office of Sustainability, <https://jcmakeitgreen.org>.

ROLL CALL

The Committee meeting commenced at 6:35 PM. Five of six voting committee members were present at the beginning of the meeting. The remaining member, Theodore G. Tasoulas, arrived at 7:06 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes from the February Shade Tree Committee Meeting were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Forestry Standards

- John McKinney, Legal Department led continued review and editing of Jersey City's Forestry Standards.
 - Enforcement piece – language can be added for clarity if it makes people more comfortable.

- Multiple offices/divisions within the City can enforce these standards but certain offices may require tweaking of enabling language within City Code.
 - It may be easier to just leave it as “City” to ensure that multiple bodies can write summonses.
- Appendix C – Approved Tree Species
 - One of the commissioners added an image of a list of recommended trees to the draft document. The group discussed the need to convert the language in the image to a text format at some point to make it easier for everyone else to edit.
 - An Excel sheet for the species list will be created so that it can be easily edited and incorporated into the Forestry Standards.
 - “Recommended cultivators” column refers to designer trees. These are trees that have been cultivated to have specific characteristics – better flowers, cold tolerance, etc.
 - City Forester pointed out that the list or approved tree species can be large but the site determines which tree is the best choice.
- Parks and Forestry Permit Application
 - Permit applies to anyone dealing with a tree in the city (developer, homeowner, etc.). Every situation/application is unique so it does take time to thoroughly review the applications.
 - Note To Proceed comes from Forester or Director of DPW. Note To Proceed means that developers may receive their certificate of occupancy
 - Discussion of how many trees one permit can be used for.
 - Most applications are for about one tree only.
 - It was noted that the City cannot charge per permit per tree. An application for multiple trees is fine as long as the City can make a proper determination if the application is acceptable.
- Proposed Maintenance Plan section:
 - This section was proposed to avoid situations similar to what happened in Droyer’s Point.
 - Questions raised - why can’t we add clear guidelines/maintenance plan for quasi-public areas, if the Forestry Standards are supposed to encompass all City tree standards and requirement?
 - Answer – the Forestry Standards lay out what is expected of developers and organizations on public property, or within the public right of way.
 - The City cannot have standards for private property unless it poses a risk to the public. The Standards should be as uniform as possible.
 - There is no reason for a special entity to be treated differently if we are talking about public property.
 - For example, issues and standards related to private/public parks should be addressed in the property’s contract/agreement but not necessarily in the Forestry Standards because these are all hypothetical situations/unique scenarios.
 - Committee members reached a general consensus that a paragraph should be added to this section that would address including maintenance agreements for

quasi-public spaces in approvals by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Historic Preservation Board.

- Note on structure of draft Forestry Standards document – “OK” in notes means that it will be addressed.
 - Mr. McKinney will remove the markups and send updated draft to the group.
- Requirements for tree protection during construction
 - This should be a conversation with Zoning or Construction Code.
 - Idea proposed that Shade Tree Committee could create a document for the enforcement body to reference during inspections.
 - Committee members will look for guidelines from another municipality or the state on standards for protecting existing tree during construction.
- Idea proposed to include a link to a specific Community Forestry Management Plan in Forestry Standards
 - This would mean that the link would have to be updated every time the plan is updated.
 - Alternatively, we could use a static link and update it every time the document changes. The Committee Members agreed to this approach.
- Step 6: Guarantee and Maintenance
 - Idea raised to add language telling people not to plant additional plants in new tree pits for the first two years at least.
 - Some of the Committee members disagreed, saying this would discourage residents from taking care of their area such as a tree pit by planting plants.
 - The Committee will revisit this issue in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Debra Italiano – Noted that her organization, SJC, was awarded a grant to do an urban heat island study this summer in participation with NOAA’s “heat watch” program. A complementary air quality monitoring study will be done through Rutgers.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Subcommittee meeting to continue reviewing Forestry Standards
 - The group discussed potential times to meet that would accommodate everyone’s schedules. Due to schedule conflicts, an SJC designee will fill in for Ms. Bailey.
 - Chair Prinz-Arey will set up an email to coordinate dates and times to meet either this week or next.
- Mr. McKinney will create a separate document for the tree species list and share that with everyone, then incorporate the document into the Forestry Standards.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee is scheduled for Monday, April 19, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be held remotely as a videoconference. Virtual access information will be distributed before the meeting.