

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 Structuring Meeting
- Date / Location:** 9 December 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
BA Conference Room, City Hall, 280 Grove Street, Jersey City, NJ 07302
- Attendees:** **Voting Committee Members**
Councilmember Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair
Theodore G. Tasoulas, Vice-Chair
Denise Bailey
David Hurtle
Marc Wesson
- Committee Members/City Representatives**
Edward O’Malley, Jersey City Forester
Kate Lawrence, Secretary
- Members of the Public**
Adam Cohen
Matthew Trump
- Prepared By:** Kate Lawrence
- Date Prepared:** December 10, 2019
Date Approved: January 13, 2020

ROLL CALL

The Committee meeting commenced at 7:10 PM. Five of five voting committee members were present. Two members of the public – Adam Cohen and Matthew Trump – who have been informally appointed but not yet approved by Council were also present.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk’s Office.

Approval of Minutes

Draft notes from the November 6 meeting were distributed to the Committee. A formal vote to approve them will be delayed until the next meeting.

Ed O’Malley – EAB Presentation

- City Forester Ed O’Malley presented an overview of the threat of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Jersey City
 - Confirmed arrival of EAB in Jersey City as of 2019
 - EAB affects all types of Ash trees

- Forester O'Malley shared a NJ Dept. of Agriculture state map showing the spread of EAB
- New York and most other municipalities treat EAB through a tree trunk injection of insecticide
 - 99% effectiveness of killing EAB using this method
 - Treatment needs to be done every 2-3 years
- If Ash tree is untreated then EAB is almost guaranteed to kill the tree
- Committee Member Marc Wesson asked at what point is it too late to treat a tree.
 - Forester O'Malley – once there is significant dieback. If 1/3 of crown is already dead then it is not worth it to treat the tree
- Existing large trees are much more important than newly-planted trees
 - Forester O'Malley did calculation for a 20" diameter tree
 - Tree value is equal to over \$100 per square inch of tree, so a 20" diameter tree is worth approximately \$32,000. To treat each Ash tree is only \$200/tree every two years.
- Committee Member David Hurtle said there aren't that many Ash trees in Jersey City
 - Forester O'Malley disagreed - says there are whole blocks in Greenville – probably hundreds of Ash trees citywide
 - Committee Member Denise Bailey asked what percentage of the City's shade tree cover Ash trees make up.
 - Forester O'Malley stated that he doesn't know because the City does not have an accurate survey.
- Mr. Wesson – can you treat trees beforehand they get infected?
 - Forester O'Malley stated that yes but best case scenario is getting a good inventory of what is infected already.
- Chair Mira Prinz-Arey stated that is definitely important to treat the trees, especially if whole blocks in Greenville are composed of Ash
- Mr. Wesson – What about contamination during the treatment process?
 - Forester O'Malley – that's where plugs come in. There are strict regulations for chemical application. Safe within 24 hours. Other options are sprays – not as good an option
- Forester O'Malley shared the Dept. of Agriculture Presentation on EAB – http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/eab_powerpoint.ppt. It can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/whatiseab.html>
- Condition of infected trees most common in JC is crown dieback. This is an indicator that we are only in first 1-2 years of invasion.
- Forester O'Malley - Most important step in responding to threat is to get a survey of where Ash trees are and if they have been affected.
 - Does Parks Coalition want to be involved? Most parks know where they are already.
 - Field instructions for parks with representation in Parks Coalition. Mr. Wesson said they can bring it up at the next meeting of the Parks Coalition.
- One of the Committee members asked about what should be done regarding EAB on private property.

- Chair Prinz-Arey suggested reaching out to JCHA and senior housing
- Matt Trump agreed that it is a good idea to get people involved and make them realize EAB is an issue
- Forester O'Malley stated that anything less than 7" diameter isn't worth treating
- Chair Prinz-Arey – Is this an issue that needs to be brought up with planning regarding developers and trees?
 - General discussion of what development approval process is in relation to trees.
 - Ms. Bailey recommended developers be required to submit maintenance plans for trees that they plant.
 - Forester O'Malley agreed that it should be looked into. He stated that there currently isn't a lot of oversight of landscape plans
- Mr. Wesson – Do you have a contractor ready to go for EAB treatment?
 - Forester O'Malley – No. We need to do survey first.
- Forester O'Malley noted that in NYC their treatment approach is to do a blanket treatment of every Ash tree in the city.
- Chair Prinz-Arey – Do you have \$ in budget?
 - Forester O'Malley – I don't have that information.
 - Cost is approximately \$8-12 per square inch which equals approximately \$240 for every Ash tree every 2 years.
 - Need approximately \$25,000 this spring.
- Mr. Wesson stated that EAB treatment needed to happen this spring.
- One of the Committee members asked if there had been any coordination with Hudson County re: Lincoln Park.
 - Forester O'Malley stated that there hasn't been but he would look into it.
- Forester O'Malley – Liberty State Park is already taken care of. The Forester at Liberty State Park has already indicated support for Jersey City's efforts to treat trees in the City.
 - Mr. Hurtle – LSP treatment was donated.
 - Mr. Trump – sponsored by companies.
- Forester O'Malley restated that the next step is getting survey done.
 - Hamilton park is great place to learn what you're looking for – classroom for EAB.
 - Forester O'Malley – Speed is of the essence right now.
 - Mr. Wesson – Can you send over trees you've identified so we don't duplicate work?
 - Forester O'Malley – yes. Need some caliper measuring tape..

Community Forestry Management Plan

- State is updating program requirements for Community Forestry Management Plan.
- JC and other municipalities received 4-year extension to update our Community Forestry Management Plans.
- Forester O'Malley doesn't want to wait until 2024 but at least a year (when new guidelines come out in October 2020).
- Is this a public document? Forester O'Malley says he doesn't know but he will look into it.

Tree Plantings

- New Citywide tree planting contract being created now
- Current contract will be voided at end of fall
 - Chair Prinz-Arey – Will the maintenance requirements for trees still be intact if the contract is voided?
 - Forester O'Malley stated that this is a good question for the Law Department
 - Forester O'Malley – Forestry is being careful to thoroughly document all plantings
 - Figured out all the issues so that next contract won't have similar issues
 - Forester O'Malley – happy with tree stock (separate contract from tree planting)
- Other Plantings
 - Office of Sustainability has \$25,000 CDBG grant that is paying for 29 trees
 - 19 additional trees near City Hall Annex planted in-house

Webpage

- Secretary Lawrence notified the Committee that a webpage for the Shade Tree Committee has been created. It can be found at www.jerseycitynj.gov/shadetreecommittee
- Several Committee Members requested that the Forestry contact information be changed to the phone number for the Resident Response Center and the website for See Click Fix.
- Get additional pest information with links: Web worms; spotted lanternfly; EAB
- Secretary Lawrence will get additional feedback from Forester O'Malley.
- Add contact info for Office of Sustainability.
- Get IT to create general email address for Shade Tree Committee.

Setting formal dates for 2020

- Tentative schedule for STC = 2nd Monday for the month
 - Problem for Adam Cohen in summer because JSQ Association meets at that time.
 - Mr. Trump – let's make schedule for 6 months and then revisit. Jan-June, 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday January 13th.
- Set up structure similar to Environmental Commission
 - 5 min max public comment in beginning of meeting
 - Cut-off date of Thursday before meeting for public comments to be addressed.
 - Minutes sent out with agenda
 - Agenda sent with notification to clerk's office

Open Discussion

- Ms. Bailey – What is role of vice-chair?
 - Chair Prinz-Arey – Vice-chair supports chair

- Vice-Chair Theodore G. Tasoulas – what is role of STC? Is goal to plant trees?
 - Secretary Lawrence – Role of STC is to coordinate, shed light on issues, make recommendations.
 - Forester O'Malley – STC can help Forestry be proactive rather than reactive. Ultimately Forestry needs a full comprehensive inventory of City Trees in order to make good decisions and think big-picture.
 - Mr. Wesson – We need to get to 40% coverage. Currently at less than 17% tree canopy coverage.
 - Forester O'Malley noted that in order to reach our tree coverage goals we need more control over public easement.
 - Some Committee Members noted issues with sidewalks caused by trees. This makes homeowners reluctant to have trees in front of their homes.
 - Forester O'Malley would be proponent of trees and sidewalks program like NYC does that fixes sidewalks problems in front of people's houses. Not everyone qualifies.
 - Mr. Hurtle – sidewalk plan is included as goal in Jersey City's Forestry Management Plan.
- One of the Committee Members asked how much staff Forestry would have in an ideal world.
 - Forester O'Malley – Ideally 4-5 people per ward or do block prunes like NYC
- Chair Prinz-Arey requested that Forester O'Malley bring role of his office, budget, and staff to next meeting.
 - Also, info on NYC's sidewalk program and any other ideas.
- Mr. Wesson – STC needs to address ordinance 321.
- Vice-Chair Tasoulas asked if the Committee should be focused on getting more money for tree planting and other related activities.
 - Chair Prinz-Arey – We can get the grant team to come in and talk about funding opportunities.
- Mr. Cohen stated that he would like to see more incorporation with the Long Term Control Plan.
- Ms. Bailey expressed that she would like to have the Office of Innovation talk about its new engagement tool on measuring trees.
- Mr. Hurtle asked Forester O'Malley how he would like to receive information on the EAB.
 - Forester O'Malley noted that entering the information into Open Tree Map is ok for now.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee will take place on Monday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the BA's Conference Room at City Hall, Jersey City, NJ 07302.