

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: 21 December 2020 – 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
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

Prepared By: Mira Prinz-Arey
Approved: January 25, 2021

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk's Office, the Jersey Journal, the Hudson Reporter, and el Especialito on December 16, 2020. The agenda was also posted on the website for the Office of Sustainability, <https://jcmakeitgreen.org>.

ROLL CALL

The Committee meeting commenced at approximately 6:45 PM. Six of six voting committee members were present.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Motion made to accept November meeting minutes
- Motion seconded and approved unanimously

NEW BUSINESS

Presentations

- SJC update to be moved to end of meeting due to technical issues

Chapter 321 amendments

- Final draft has been added to the council agenda – first read Dec 19; second read and vote for adoption Jan 13

OPEN DISCUSSION

Forestry Standards: Open discussion with committee members

Items discussed –

- Enforcement is not in current document
 - If no arborist or forester on staff decisions may be arbitrary – suggest that language be added requesting the city to contract with a forester if none are on staff
- Question raised – are all members comfortable with sharing the draft via a public meeting? All approved it was ok to do so. PSA that this is a working draft and not a final copy
- Suggested that the standards tie trees & maintenance to developments in perpetuity, not 2 years. Concern that once a property is sold the new owner will try to remove or not maintain
 - All removals/changes are tied to permits. Item up for further discussion
- Question raised – is the chat function on for public comment?
 - Q & A is on, but not part of the live stream
- Green infrastructure
 - Language added to refer back to Green Infrastructure Standards
 - Language added to refer back to Storm Water Management Plan
- Cost per tree – should it be raised?
 - Estimates for costs to fee structure – minimum and maximum amounts
 - A better place for this may be in city fees structure in the code
 - Former forester set the current price
 - Further discussion on setting fees – flat rate vs. equal value
 - Payment-in-lieu form should be part of the forestry standards
- 1D2 – suggested section for language on enforcement
- 1E – Vandalism
 - Change fee range to reflect upper limit of \$2,000, per the ordinance
 - May be better in the code under fees schedule
 - Language can reflect upper limit – conversation on logistics and labor issues for tree replacement will be moved offline and shared at the next meeting
 - City is researching what other municipalities charge for replacement
- 2B5 – Tree Wrap
 - Are trees wrapped on delivery?
 - All should be wrapped to avoid damage to trunks
 - Forester ensures all are wrapped – this is how they are purchased from nurseries
- 2A2 – Tree pits
 - Should tree pit sizes be “required” or “preferred”?

- Forester made need to have some flexibility in sizes – i.e. sidewalk is too narrow
- 2B5 - Tree Wrap
 - Tags left on the first year to help with mapping and inventory.
- Question raised – What is NJ Fertilization Law?
 - Outlines phosphorus levels in Jersey City soil
- 1F1 – Tree Valuation
 - Should it be updated to include costs of site prep, cost of tree, and maintenance?
 - Should 14” deviation be raised?
 - These valuations work better for smaller caliper trees – i.e. a 20” tree can cost over \$10k
 - Discussion will move offline and come back next meeting
- 2B7 – Staking
 - Not clear if this is only for contractors.
 - Should clarify that onus is on the owner
 - Should be part of permitting process for homeowners and contractors so it is clear who is responsible for staking and removing
- Concerns raised around the issue of using gator bags
 - If used improperly it can lead to rot, fungus, and insects that can kill the tree
 - Best practice is to water the soil around the tree, not trunk and leaves
- *Action item* –
 - Ed O’Malley will send tree valuation information to group to evaluate replacement costs
- 1B2 – Green Infrastructure
 - II.I – Bioswales/Green Infrastructure
 - Language added to refer to green infrastructure standards and bioswales to planning
 - GI elements added as an appendix
- 1C – Maintenance
 - Maintenance plan for developers, existing entities, and SIDS should be included.
 - Clarify Developer/owner responsibilities
 - PDF of landscape/architecture designs for GI have been sent via email to the group
 - Maintenance should have two separate sections – general maintenance and specific maintenance for developers, existing entities, and SIDS
- Appendix for standards – should species be added?
 - Should high-wind species and areas be added?
 - List should be generated by forester and updated annually as planting zones may change
 - Identify high-wind areas and refer back to forester list
- *Issue Raised* – appendices were not included in the shared document
 - Formatting issues are the reason. Will be added for next meeting to discuss

- Forester should review data on recently planted trees as part of annual species reviews
- Should a sub-committee be formed to review species list with the forester, then present to STC?
- Parks and Forestry application has been added to the standards. Can be reviewed annually and amended via resolution
 - Should it stay in the appendices or live at the end of the standards for easy reference?
- Guidance should be given on enforcement and mechanisms to include moving forward.
 - Will be part of discussion for next meeting
- Forestry Standards review closed

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Public Comment opened -
 - Caroline Katz
 - Liz Morrill – no answer
 - Deb Italiano – no answer
- Motion to close public comment; seconded and approved by acclimation

OPEN DISCUSSION (CONT.)

- Old Business/presentation – SJC presentation will be moved to next meeting to allow for proper amount of time
- Question raised – were any decisions made from the closed meeting and can they be shared publically?
 - Send email to clarify question and it will be answered

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting; seconded and approved by acclimation at approximately 8:30p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee is scheduled for Monday, January 25, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be held remotely as a videoconference. Virtual access information will be distributed before the meeting.