

# 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:** 25 January 2021 – 6:30 p.m.  
Videoconference remote meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:** **Voting Committee Members**  
Mira Prinz-Arey, Chair  
Adam Cohen  
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  
Kate Lawrence

**Prepared By:** Kate Lawrence  
**Date Approved:** 2/22/21

## PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notice was sent to the City Clerk’s Office, the Jersey Journal, the Hudson Reporter, and el Especialito on January 22, 2021. The agenda was also posted on the website for the Office of Sustainability, <https://jcmakeitgreen.org>.

## ROLL CALL

The Committee meeting commenced at approximately 6:30PM. Five of six voting committee members were present at the beginning of the meeting. The remaining member, Chair Mira Prinz-Arey, arrived at 6:58 p.m.

## APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Motion made to accept December 2020 minutes
- Motion seconded and approved 5-1

## UPDATES

### Jersey City Environmental Commission (JCEC) – Matt Trump

- After a discussion with Forester Ed O’Malley and Sustainability Director Kate Lawrence, the JCEC feels comfortable with direction of City and Forester

regarding tree management and planning. Recommendations from JCEC for next steps on inventory is for City to proceed as is.

- JCEC is also writing a letter of recommendation for the Hudson Essex Greenway.

### **Sustainable Jersey City (SJC) – Debra Italiano**

- SJC is happy with the success of their tree mapping program and is gearing up for 2021 engagement and training. Wishes that they had a more formal partnership with City.
- In 2021, SJC will focus on their tree mapping initiative, tree-related legislation, and funding opportunities.

Mira Prinz-Arey joined the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Forestry Standards**

#### **John McKinney, Legal Dept. – Review and comments on standards**

- All suggested changes are embedded in digital document
- Change listed organization from Division of Parks & Forestry and other divisions to Jersey City.
- Question raised regarding relationship of document to Zoning and Planning.
  - Planning and Zoning reference 345 – all tied together.
- Concern about how Standards can be properly enforced without having Forester on staff
  - Legal will look into this
- Question raised about tracking number and location of trees being planted by developers.
  - Planning noted that this is not realistically possible given staffing
  - Idea of tracking numbers through SDL portal
  - Question raised – is Forester was tracking all permits?
    - Only trees that deviate from standards
  - Tracking all plantings is good goal for the future
- Question raised about whether Forestry Standards can be referenced in ordinance and development application.
  - Forestry standards are currently referenced in Zoning Code
  - We can add direct reference to Zoning application
  - Idea raised of sending Forestry Standards to developers to make sure they are aware of standards
- Suggestion for inclusion of definitions section with Forestry Standards
  - Should definitions be the same as 321?
  - Legal noted that they should but could go further
- Question raised – who is tracking MUA's tree plantings? Do we coordinate with state and county regarding trees in their parks?
  - Not sure but this would be great information to have.

- Suggestion was raised to update approved tree species
  - Can tree list be added to editable document?
  - Yes for tree species table, no for engineering drawings.
- Question raised – who is document for?
  - Suggestion to add other City agencies to this paragraph in the beginning of Standards
- Suggestion to add “these standards have the force of law”
  - Legally, this is unnecessary but ok
- Suggestion to change “should” to “shall” whenever appropriate
- Discrepancy between 15 and 20 foot distance related to construction and barriers around trees.
  - Needs to be changes to 15 feet throughout
  - Discussion as to why protection of trees during construction doesn’t occur as required
  - Suggestion to add item to developer checklist
- Question about planting plants around trees. Should this be allowed?
  - Apparently lots of constituents have this question. Gray area.
  - Planting flowers shouldn’t happen during first two years of tree’s life in order to ensure optimum water and nutrient absorption. Planting of shrubs shouldn’t happen at all.
  - Note to explore further
- Tree Removal Section
  - Minor edits to language related to removal
  - Discussion of who makes determination if there is no Forester on staff – handle in definitions?
  - Removal criteria – as determined by Forester
  - Planning Board/Zoning Board approval for applications requiring a tree removal
  - Add criteria related to sidewalk lifting
  - All criteria needs to reference Forester approval in some way.
- Tree Replacements
  - Suggestion made for replacement trees to be planted next to dying trees whenever possible
    - Could be issue when an area is not suitable to tree success
    - Not appropriate strategy for planting street trees
    - Needs further discussion
  - Old growth trees – need to plant multiple trees to make up for replacement of larger trees
  - Add clarifying language to plant elsewhere if site conditions are problematic?
  - Can we have dedicated fund for planting trees?
    - Unfortunately this is not possible according to State law..
  - Suggestion made for replacement street trees to be planted close to where trees have been removed.

- Will help to avoid situation where some neighborhoods have no trees
- This is problem in Journal Square neighborhood.
- We can add language that replacement tree will be planted as close as possible to tree that they are replacing.
- Question raised - how is value of tree determined?
  - Industry standard referenced by Forester is recommended as best approximation.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Caroline Katz-Mount – Noted that she is very pleased with process

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

- Discussion of next meeting date
  - Needs to be moved to February 22 because of President's Day holiday.
  - Suggestion made to meet sooner.
  - Additional suggestion made to have interim working meeting before next public meeting.
  - It's possible not everyone can attend. Several dates were suggested. Interim meeting date will be discussed offline.
- Request was made to include questions from STC member email in minutes.
  - It was noted that meeting minutes are for what occurs during a meeting
  - Answers to questions are not always immediately available.
- Suggestion made that edits to and discussion of Forestry Standards should be public process, not something that occurs during working meetings.
  - Legal advised that this does not accommodate time constraints and offline conversations can be covered quickly during public meetings.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn meeting; seconded and approved by acclamation at approximately 8:54 p.m.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Jersey City Shade Tree Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 22, 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.