

Flemington Borough Environmental Commission & Shade Tree Commission
Special Joint Meeting
Monday July 8th 2024 @ 7:00 pm
Borough Hall
Minutes

Meeting start time: 7:04

Attendance: Trent Levitt, Marcia Karrow, Jane Cannon, Melissa Swingle, Jae Hoff, Mike Campion, Elizabeth Rossetti, Beth McManus, Justin Schlenger, Freddy Mejia

Public Comment:

No members of the public were present for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

There were no minutes from previous months to approve at the meeting.

Discussion of Planning Board Checklist:

The Commissions discussed the Land Use Board's Checklist for Completeness. Every applicant that comes before the Planning Board must submit the appropriate paperwork according to the type of application before coming before the board. The Planning Board reserves the right to request additional items and all applicants must abide by NJ state regulations. Both Commissions agreed to take a closer look at the checklist, but noted no major concerns after initial review.

Approved List of Trees:

The Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Commission discussed the need for updates to the list of approved trees for new construction and redevelopment in the borough. The list of approved trees has not been updated in a number of years and includes species that we now know to be undesirable or harmful, such as the Bradford Pear.

The Shade Tree Commission will take lead on reviewing the list of approved trees and will discuss the list at future meetings.

Tree Removal Ordinance:

The tree removal ordinance will be reviewed by McManus to ensure it meets current codes. Once the ordinance has been reviewed, it will be submitted to the Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Commission for review and approval.

One item of the tree removal ordinance to be reviewed is the formula for calculating the cost of removing a healthy tree. Factors to be considered include:

1. Tree species (native vs. ornamental, etc.)
 - a. The Commissions discussed whether it would be appropriate to have a larger fee for larger shade trees compared to small ornamental varieties.
2. The environmental conditions of the site
3. Special consideration for invasive species

- a. The Commissions discussed a waiver for any removal fees if the tree is an invasive species.
- 4. Credits for residential properties
- 5. Type of root system of tree when measuring root ball
 - a. Different types of trees have different types of root systems (tap root vs. more dispersed root ball) that may need to be considered.
- 6. Solar panels and trimming
 - a. The Commission discussed whether there should be a fee for trimming or removing trees to accommodate solar panels.

The Commissions noted that there should be no financial penalties to removing a dead or diseased tree as long as the tree has been properly inspected by a tree professional.

End of meeting: 8:18