

Tree Commission

Hamden, Connecticut

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

This meeting was held via Zoom.

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Call to Order

Mr. Parlapiano called the meeting to order at 6:46pm.

Commission Members

Thomas Parlapiano - *Chair*

Glen Cummings

Michael Montgomery

Jill Nathanson

Susan Sternberg

Others in Attendance

Geoff Harris - *Consulting Arborist*

Diane Hoffman

Alyssa Bussard - *Commission Clerk*

Agenda

Approval of April 20, 2021 Minutes

Mr. Parlapiano asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on April 20, 2021. Ms. Nathanson pointed out that the minutes stated that Mr. Cesare was working with Geoff on planting trees, the minutes should reflect that Mr. Cesare was working with Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Parlapiano asked for a motion to approve the minutes with that edit, the motion was made by Ms. Sternberg and seconded by Ms. Nathanson. The motion passed in favor with Mr. Montgomery abstaining.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Ms. Diane Hoffman brought up the idea of having plaques to tell the public the name of the trees planted around town. Some examples of locations would be at Town Center Park, or the library. Many on the commission were very enthusiastic about this endeavor, but the expense may pose a problem. Mr. Parlapiano raised some issues regarding the types of plaques and their different issues. Mr. Montgomery brought up the idea of adding information to the website regarding some of the trees that have recently been planted.

Old Business

1. Tree Activity Report

Mr. Harris spoke regarding the difficulty of giving proper time to the things that need his attention as he has a lot of responsibilities. Mr. Harris reported on four large pin oaks that were located at St. Rita's Church. After testing the trees, he did recommend removal of one tree. There is one other tree at this location that Mr. Harris and Public Works employees are watching but at this time it has just been pruned. They will continue to monitor its progress.

There is a silver maple tree at 28 Humiston Avenue that has been pruned in the past, it now has clear dying limbs. Mr. Harris believes it should be taken down at this point. Upon examining the trees at 1085 Ridge Road, Mr. Harris did not find anything wrong, so nothing needs to be attended. Mr. Harris also reported to the town on two maple trees at Town Center Park with broken hangers that pose significant risk to the public. There is also a white oak at Town Center park that has died.

The UI is back working in town, Mr. Harris was notified that they would be back in town to work on the circuits that he had previously assessed.

Mr. Harris also spoke about a neighbor dispute regarding a tree that was leaning over someone's property. Unfortunately, the police had to be called regarding the dispute. There was a discussion regarding the rights of the property owner and what exactly they are allowed to do in this instance. Mr. Harris was hoping that there could be some sort of written information regarding the statute that would pertain to this instance.

2. Notable Trees

Ms. Nathanson was in the process of writing the article for the Appalachian Spring Dogwood.

There was a discussion regarding the June notable tree. Mr. Montgomery mentioned honey locust trees that are located at the bridge on Davis Street as well as at the entrance to East Rock Park. Mr. Parlapiano mentioned the possibility of showcasing a Japanese Red Maple as there are many around town and they are beautiful. Mr. Parlapiano will try to find some good pictures so that they can be used in the article for June.

3. Tree Planting

Mr. Montgomery reported that 53 trees had been planted in the town. Unfortunately, two of the trees that were planted at Hamden Middle School were possibly lost due to the high temperatures during planting. There were also two trees that were under stress. He stated that he noticed that more people are requesting to plant trees at their own expense. He does sometimes discuss what types of trees they should plant and makes himself available for any assistance needed. Mr. Montgomery also stated that there should be a list of recommended trees available to the public. Mr. Parlapiano stated that the commission should work with the Tree Warden on this list.

4. Education

Mr. Parlapiano brought up the idea of having a tree scavenger hunt in town that would direct the participant and give information on the tree.

5. Commission Liaison Report

Mr. Cummings reported that there was no Clean and Green meeting, he did not attend the EUCC meeting, and the Natural Resources and Open Space Commission will meet next month.

6. Epoc Grant Update

There is no new information at this time.

New Business

1. Consulting Arborist

Mr. Parlapiano confirmed that as mentioned last month, there were not many applications for the consulting arborist position. Mr. Cesare and other town managers are working on ways to advertise the position better to hopefully gain more applications.

2. Connecticut SB950: An Act Concerning The Replacement of Public Utility Poles and Revising Vegetation Management in Utility Protection Zones.

A discussion ensued regarding the Connecticut SB950. Mr. Harris was under the impression that this act had been tabled. Ms. Nathanson confirmed that it has been pulled for this session. After discussion, the commission decided that the letter should be amended by Mr. Parlapiano to state that the commission members know that the act has been tabled but they are still opposed to any movement on an act of this nature. The vote for Mr. Parlapiano to create and send the letter occurred at the April 2021 meeting of this commission.

3. Other

There was no other business reported.

Old Business

1. Tree Ordinance

There is a roadblock in the redefinition of the Tree Warden's responsibility. Mr. Parlapiano is waiting for a response to emails sent to some town managers. In order to move forward, there needs to be a union representative from Public Works at a meeting with everyone to ensure that everything is meeting the standards put forth by the union, and so on.

Adjournment

Mr. Parlapiano requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Ms. Nathanson and seconded by Mr. Cummings. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting concluded at 8:00pm.