

BOROUGH OF WEST READING
SHADE TREE COMMISSION
April 4, 2022

The Shade Tree Commission met on Monday, April 4, 2022 at Borough Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. with Chairperson Patrick Kaag; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; and Commission Members Chad Moyer, Lynne Burns, and Zachary Shaver. Commission Member Yahaira Castillo was absent.

Visitor: Paige West, Visitor Samantha Kaag, Mayor

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve minutes of the February 7, 2022 meeting was made by Mr. Moyer and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 5-0.**

New Business

West Reading – Wyomissing Rotary Club Tree Planting: Mr. Kaag reminded the Commission and public about the upcoming tree planting in the West Reading Park system on the south side of the creek on 4/30/22. An update was given by Kerry Grassley from an email sent by Kevin Weber of the Rotary club stating that (5) species were chosen in addition to the original trees spoken about at the previous meeting. These (5) additional species are Swamp White Oak, Black Gum, Parrotia, Bald Cypress, & Yellowwood. These additional species will be slightly bigger than the small whips when transplanted. There will be an online signup provided by the Rotary club for volunteers who want to participate & help with the planting process.

Tree Removals: Mr. Grassley and Mr. Moyer updated the commission and public on recent activity in previous months and plans for next month. (6) Pines were removed from area between Firehouse & railroad tracks due to decay/damage/interference. intersection of Walnut St & Olive St, (2) crabapples removed due to decay and utility interference. Ann St, public works will remove (3) Zelcovas from the west side of the street due to overgrown in space, interfering with underground utilities, and large heaving of sidewalks. An outside contractor is being hired to remove (2) remaining large Zelcovas on the same street that were too much for public works to handle for the same reasons. Dean Murray recommended that PA One Call will be made asap to ensure that public utilities are not damaged during removals. Mr. Kaag stated that our shade trees are extremely important to our borough for quality of life for our residents but interference with utilities and safety of our crosswalks has to be considered as well when it comes to removal of trees. Potentially removing the following trees after they are evaluated: 5th Ave there is a tree blocking a 15-mph speed limit sign, Sycamore tree near Barbershop on Chestnut & South 4th showing signs of decline as well. A “watchlist” section will be added to future agendas in order to provide further distinction with trees that need to be evaluated and help with budgeting.

Tree Trimming: Mr. Grassley and Mr. Moyer updated the commission and public on recent activity in previous month and plans for next month. Previous year’s list was mentioned as reference since that list has not been entirely completed. Kent way some trees need to be “dead wooded”, Olive Street trimmings, Franklin Street between 600-700 block trimmings.

Plantings: Mr. Kaag reminded the commission about the Rotary Club planting as discussed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Murray and Mr. Grassley had mentioned that they have been referencing the

Open Spaces map down at the borough public works building for future planting locations. Lynne Burns mentioned that some trees or flowers would look good added to Delaney circle and the area surrounding. Discussion was had regarding future plantings there and it was determined that any trees planted there now would potentially be wasted if/when the redevelopment occurs at the circle and surrounding streets/parcels.

Mr. Grassley brought up that Kevin Weber would like to come and educate public works and shade tree on improvement of maintenance practices and ways to prevent future issues.

Mr. Kaag mentioned that the (6) Pines that were removed by the firehouse have also opened up land that is being slated for the future of the community garden. The Mayor was present at the meeting in the audience and spoke about this topic briefly to inform the commission of the site being utilized for the new community garden. She described the basic location, layout and plans for the garden including beginning the installation of the garden by this Fall at the latest. The current garden will be closed out before the lease is up, which is the end of July. This all is still pending approval but has been progressing in that direction. Discussion was had regarding fencing, water access, and coordinating maintenance with Public Works. Mr. Murray had mentioned that there were community gardens right across the street before the houses were built almost 100 years ago, so it's serendipitous that the garden would be moving back to that location.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. was made by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Burns.

Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Kaag
Commission Member