

SUMMARY OF SHADE TREE COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2015

The Shade Tree Commission has 5 active volunteer members. In 2015, the commission spent 421 hours, valued at \$9,712, carrying out the following activities.

TREE MAINTENANCE

- * Responded to 134 tree inspection requests, of which residents originated 83, the Department of Public Works (DPW) originated 2, and the Shade Tree Commission originated 49;
- * As a result of tree inspections, requested removal of 64 trees and referred them to the DPW for removal;
- * As a result of tree inspections, requested pruning of 54 trees and referred them to the DPW for action;
- * Commissioners watered 10 recently planted dogwood trees on Tea Street ball field weekly from May through October.

TREE PLANTING

- * Purchased 41 trees;
 - determined planting sites;
 - developed and distributed letters to residents in both English and Spanish informing them of borough plans to plant a tree in the right of way in front of their home; (If they did not want a tree their address was removed from the list.)
 - sent requests for quotes to 3 nursery/landscapers for purchase of approximately 45 trees, evaluated results and selected supplier;
 - oversaw planting of budgeted street trees to assure that ropes, cages and burlap were removed and that trees were planted at a proper depth;
 - watered each newly planted tree once;
 - wrote and distributed letters in both English and Spanish to residents asking them to water newly planted trees.
- * Consulted with the Borough engineers on five road projects (Hardy, Park, Church, Watchung, and Chestnut); planted 39 trees as part of road jobs.
 - with engineers, identified trees to be removed location and tree species of trees to be planted;
 - reviewed engineers schematics for accuracy;
 - canvassed residents in area of road jobs to see if they would accept a new tree;
 - oversaw tree plantings to verify that the ropes, cages and burlap were removed from trees and to see that the trees were planted at the proper depth;
 - watered each newly planted tree once;
 - wrote and distributed letters in both English and Spanish to residents asking them to water newly planted trees.

BUDGET EXPENDITURES

- * The Shade Tree Commission received a budget of \$10,900 in 2015 of which \$10,820 was expended. Budgeted funds were spent as follows: \$95 for New Jersey Shade Tree Federation (NJSTF) dues; \$525 for shade tree commissioners and Department of Public Works (DPW) personnel to attend the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation Conference; \$30 to register for a Shade Tree Commission table at Riverfest, a community event; \$2,520 for the removal of three trees that the borough's DPW were not equipped to handle; \$7,650 for purchase and professional planting of 34 B&B trees at street side locations throughout the Borough (fall 2015 and spring 2016 planting). In addition, \$1,575 was spent from a Shade Tree trust fund to purchase an additional 7 trees.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- * Planned and hosted the Arbor Day Event at Lafayette School on April 22 and planted 2 seedlings with third graders;
 - interfaced with High School and Lafayette school Assistant Principals and Board of Education maintenance personnel in planning event which included tree seedlings which the schools had received as a grant from the Wildlife Federation;
 - prepared presentation on trees and their benefits;
 - wrote an Arbor Day proclamation and arranged for borough council to approve and have mayor sign;
 - held event at Lafayette School for parents and children; proclamation was read by Councilman Pranzatelli; a commissioner gave a presentation on "Trees"; commissioners demonstrated planting of a seedling in a large container;
 - taught a third grade class at Lafayette a lesson on trees and afterwards planted 2 tree seedlings in the school yard with the third grade class;
 - wrote newspaper article about the Arbor Day event that was published in 2 local newspapers and on a web site.
- * Staffed a table at the borough's Riverfest event; had tree guessing game and 'Bound Brook Shade Trees' pencil for children, tree related brochures for adults, inspection request forms and forms requesting new trees available; commissioners also answered residents' questions.
- * Commissioners usually call the resident that requested a tree pruning/removal to inform them of the action that will be taken.
- * Requested residents to water newly planted trees at the front/side of their homes. Instructions on use of watering bags were written and provided to each home.
- * Alerted residents to a planned tree planting in front of their house and gave them the opportunity to refuse a tree before tree planting day.
- * Made the modification requested by the planning board to the recommended changes to the borough land use ordinance for site planning. The change to the borough's land use ordinance was to follow the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation recommendations for trees to be planted in the borough's right-of-way. The revised ordinance change was approved by council, and the planning board.

EDUCATION

- * Researched trees to be planted for both road construction projects and budgeted planting for disease resistance, height, and minimum required planting strip width.
- * Three commissioners and one DPW employee attended NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference Training and earned 15 CEUs. Training is required by the borough's state approved management plan. The approved plan and annual reports provide liability protection to the borough from tree related events.

ADMINISTRATION

- * prepared agendas for monthly Shade Tree Commission meetings
 - On average 4 members and the borough council liaison attended monthly meetings;
 - wrote monthly meeting minutes;
- * maintained the inspections database and tracked the status of each inspection request - date an inspection request (134 in 2015) was received, inspection findings and requested action, date of inspection , date the request was given to the DPW for action and date the DPW reported the action completed.
- * added trees to our tree inventory data base and updated it when trees were removed;
- * completed required annual status update reports for Tree City USA recertification, NJ Forest Service – Community Forestry Service, and the Bound Brook Borough council.

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