

Dumont Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes
July 20th 2015 7:30pm, Dumont Arboretum Gazebo, West Shore Avenue

Present- Ray Slaman, Tom Fisichella, Sally Tayeb, Kathy Sheridan-Parrish, Abbie Slaman, Mike Kuhn remotely on phone

Guest- Rachel Bunin

Absent- Larry Tobias

1. **Call to Order-** Kathy makes a motion to begin the meeting. Tom Seconds. Meeting begins 7:35pm.
 2. **Review prior meeting minutes-** Kathy notes that in the June minutes the date for the next meeting in July is wrong and needs to be changed. Ray proposes that the June minutes be accepted with the amended date. Unanimously accepted.
 3. **Discussion of homeowner issues-** No Homeowners are present. Tom brings up an issue on West Church Street. A homeowner has a dead tree in back of his house. He believes it is in an easement the town has for access to the sewer/drainage. Ray says it would be helpful if the homeowner has his survey. We will check with DPW for clarification.
- 4. Arboretum**
- a. **Bricks, benches and dedications-** Kathy says we have received the 4 brick order and the 3 brick order is in production. Ray brings up sponsorship of the benches. He notes that all the benches at Van Saun Park have plaques. We need to come up with a procedure to do this at the Arboretum. Ray believes that the cost of sponsorship should be for one person/business and it will be forever. Mike and Rachel will research other places that have bench sponsorship and find out their procedures and cost.
 - b. **Maintenance, inspections and general upkeep-** July is Mike's month for inspection. Tom and Ray who have spent time at the Arboretum state that it is in pretty good shape. A sizeable branch was lost of the Elm. We have a new sign stating security at the Arboretum. Sally would like to put

a product called Bat Stink at the bat house to attract bats. CTE Joe Ulrich has brought his expertise to the Arboretum and has logged 2 hours with trimming etc. Tom will check with Weedman for spraying the weeds between the bricks.

5. Proposal for Arboretum expansion-

a. **Discussion of Tom's idea for "Arboretum South"** – Ray brings up a possible proposal to take responsibility for Sorosis Park. Tom has done research of the area. He brings up the area south of Madison Avenue along the tracks. This is town property and could be taken on as an extension of the Arboretum. It could be developed as a walkway that leads to Sorosis Park. Tom believes Sorosis Park could be developed into a place for a community Garden, have a space for Horticultural Therapy, renew the playground and have a Farmers Market. He will contact Parks and Recreation Commission. Tom has drawn up a blueprint of how it could possibly look. Rachel says that on Google maps it shows West Shore Ave extending south of Madison Ave. Tom asks everyone to take a walk thru and check it out. We are in the beginning stages of exploring the possibilities.

6. Community outreach and communication-

Rachel says the summer newsletter is out. The fall newsletter will come out sometime after Dumont Day. September/early October. Abbie brings up that she prints 30 color copies at a cost of \$80.00. Half of the copies go to the Senior Center and half to the Library. Sally says she may have access to print more color copies.

7. Dumont Day Discussion- There is one more meeting before Dumont Day. There is a discussion about what we should focus on. It is Saturday September 12th. We will have representation of the Garden Committee. We should promote the Scholarship. Tom still has items that could be sold from the Railroad event.

8. FOTST-Sally has been doing research into where to look for grants and donations. She has found that CSX gives money for tree planting. She also says the next "Friends" meeting will be 7:30 August 5th at her house.

9. **DSTC funding and budget discussion-** Ray says that the budget is out and the DSTC budget is \$9,100 less than the prior year. Ray has reached out to Don our council representative but has not has a chance to connect with him. Ray states that tree maintenance and removal is a DPW function and part of our budget pays for the Shade Tree truck. Kathy says last year we only did one planting and in the past we had done two. Our expenditures were less. Ray says we have lost on average 100 trees and only been able to plant 50 trees. We still have the need to plant trees to recoup the loss. Ray will look into the budget decision.

REGULAR BUSINESS

10. **I-Tree-** Larry is absent. We will catch up next meeting.
11. **Tree Maintenance-** Tom states that we are basically up to date. Kathy asks Tom to send an email of the trees he would like her to check.
12. **Adopt-a-tree-** Tom would like to add “testimonials” to any advertising that is done for Adopt-a-tree. Kathy says maybe we could put them on the Facebook page. It is good public relations to show residents who are happy with their trees. These trees are to be put on town property. Ray says the Green Neighbor Hood program is an asset to the homeowner, neighborhood and town. Sally asks if maybe we want to make the flier into a door hanger for the fall planting.
13. **Town Council Ordinance-**
 - a. **Permit Update-** We are up to date on our permits. Ray believes a tree may have been saved. The homeowner may change his mind after being informed of the value of the tree and its role in preventing flooding in the area.
 - b. **New ordinance language for fines and violations-**Kathy brings up what was said by residents at the last council meeting. They had concern for being fined. Some felt there was already language present in the ordinance. There is not specific language in the ordinance and that is a problem for any kind of enforcement of the permit process. Abbie states that we need

specific language that will state a consequence for violation of the permit process along the lines of any other permit violation. Trees are town assets and need to have the same protection. All agree.

14. **Summer Schedule-** The August meeting will be at the Arboretum Gazebo on West Shore Ave on August 17th 7:30pm.

Kathy makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike seconds. Meeting ends 9:01pm.