



# AGENDA

## DUMONT SHADE TREE COMMISSION

11/20/2017



**Monday, 7:30-9 pm**  
**Senior Center**  
**39 Dumont Ave. Dumont, NJ 07628**

Call to Order: Tom Opened/ Rachel Second motion 7:30pm

In Attendance:

Ray Slaman  
Tom Fisichella  
Abbie Slaman  
Kathy Zitelli  
Tanya Zimmerman  
Bill Zitelli  
Rachel Bunin  
Tara Barker  
Councilman/Liaison Lou Di Paolo

Minutes by Rachel Bunin:

1. DIAL commissioners that are participating remotely: no remote dial in attendees
2. Review Prior Meeting Minutes: not available to review. will be done next month (per RS) noted that dumont.gov website doesn't have many of the DSTC minutes posted
3. Discussion of homeowner issues/questions (if any)
  - 11 Richard Court
  - 6 Colonial Court
4. Community outreach and communication
  - a. Newsletter
    - Rachel and Tanya will take over distribution process from Mike K. Abbie and/or Rachel will send through FB from website
  - b. Website, social media
    - Rachel contacted Sandra Scaiano (Dumont resident who has a website design company) to write a proposal to update our website. Current website is maintained by Abbie on a very old computer, is in FrontPage (defunct software)
    - Update: As of 11/22/17 Sandra submitted proposal; rachel sent to all commissioners for review and voting for approval
    - Report from Abbie: Instagram 161 followers | 300 Following 47% men 53%-woman ages 24-34 international group
    - Report from Abbie: Twitter: Following 219 followers 103 and growing
5. Arboretum
  - Doing fine, nothing major to report
  - Community using it more and more
  - Problem with S&S shopping carts left there
  - Gail Ferrer is doing the Holiday decorations; took down the Veterans Day flags
  - Tom F has more holiday decorations to donate
  - May have leftovers from Wreath event on 12/4 that will contribute

- Library: people are taking books but not necessarily leaving them but it's being used
- a. Maintenance, inspections, general upkeep (monthly assignments)
    - Nothing to report
  - b. Community use of the Arboretum
6. Events update; spread the word
- Tara: Wreath event planning for 12/4 is going well
  - Volunteers to bring coffee and cakes
  - Tom F has Coffee and Tea to bring
  - TBN notice is in, event updates in FB will happen next week
- a. Honiss School program; Deforestation and local impact.
    - 12/1/17 in Gym: will be about 30 minutes long focus on tangible value of trees
    - meeting to finalize details w/ Dr. Bennet and Snr Alzate 11/21 3:10pm
    - Oddities will be brought by Tom
    - PPT by Ray
    - Presentation will be for about 120 kids
    - Handouts: the coloring books (by Tom) and seed packets
  - b. FOTST Holiday Wreath Project – \$20/ will go to scholarship fund after expenses

## 7. Tree Nursery Project

- Nursery was a very well-advertised and announced event that took place on Saturday 11/18/17
- Original location and date for installation: Saturday November 18, 2017 10am
- McGaw Park - Bedford Road between Barbara Rd. and White Beeches Rd
- Ray got there early with all equipment and marked the space. the 20' area planned and included in the proposal is an underused section of McGaw park
- What happened next lead us to move the project to Arboretum North...a rec commissioner came out of his house across the street and told Ray the project was not approved and we had to stop
- This project was presented to ALL authorities in a 15-page detailed proposal by Ray Slaman; was presented to the DPW (had no objections) and the Council (Mayor and council didn't voice any objections by the DSTC for months (maybe a year). apparently, the Rec commission (we are investigating their authority to stop projects on town parks (they control the activities but perhaps not the land?!) voted it down at a meeting by NOBODY thought to inform the Shade Tree commission of this vote. Lou didn't say he knew or not and Don Morrell (Rec liaison also didn't let the Shade tree know.
- The Rec commission who came out (Michael Prulello) threatened Ray with arrest if he continued to plant the trees in the park
- RAY detailed the events to Lou D. our councilman/ liaison who sat and listened and had no defense or explanation for this... my notes of Ray's retelling of the events to Lou follow (as best as I could take them)
- The shade tree volunteers showed up EARLY on 12/18 Saturday morning with 140 pots, a gas auger, other tools and trees. Ray was there early working and had done a lot of work when he left around 8:20am to get more supplies and then came back to find that Michael Prulello had left him a NOTE tucked into the tools stating "Rec voted it down"
- Carole Stewart (councilwoman-elect) came to the site because was called, but had no authority since she's not sworn in until January 2018. Expressed concern and astonishment at the situation
- - A few things: if this was a problem: why didn't rec or anyone tell the DSTC about this vote?
  - Why did he wait for Ray to leave and leave a note; he lives across the street. he waited

for Ray to do 3 hours of work then leave and left a note.

- Ray asked him how this could be? And repeated the facts that we had gone through all channels. At this point Michael Prulello said he would call the police and have Ray arrested if he continued to plant the trees
- Ray tried to reach Lou (no answer) but then Councilman Don Morrell (Rec liaison) showed up and insisted we stop.
- REC minutes are not posted so we had no way to know
- Per Morrell (??) by way of explanation why DSTC couldn't use the land is that Jerry Toner (rec comm) said Rec was 'planning to use the space sometime in the future'
- WE believe the REC controls the programs and functions in town but not the space or trees
- The Mayor has been silent on this. Jerry Toner was involved and also on Saturday (first time after knowing about this project) said it was rejected.
- DSTC controls ALL trees in town that are borough trees
- Lou DiPaolo was asked by Ray if anyone on Rec expressed concerns about the Tree Nursery at the Rec meeting (Lou attended) Lou said that he was at the September meeting but the commissioners wanted to discuss it among themselves.
- Post meeting note from Kathy Sheridan: "As far as I know if a Commission is discussing anything it is open to the public and minutes are taken. It's the reason for the sunshine law. There are no discussions that should be had outside of public access. " We should find out what went on.. we hope Lou DiPaolo is investigating (see postscript note 2 below)
- Ray and Tom presented to Rec and there were no objections
- There were no objections from Council after Ray's and Toms presentations
- WHAT changed? And we question Rec's authority in this matter
- Lou said he'd bring it up at council... he had no clarity on the events by way of defense nor an explanation.
- Ray was outraged that REC threatened him with arrest and police action. After all the Shade Tree volunteers do for Dumont this action could cause us to just give up (Ray was so upset that he told Lou he was almost to the point of resigning.)
- Phil Devententes is doing a story on the nursery project (was going to be a positive for Dumont) with this all happening. Doesn't shed a positive light on our government.
- \*\*postscript to the meeting a note from Lou sent on 11/27\*\*
- Lou said " he brought the packet made by Ray to the September Rec meeting, Lou's quote "where I filled in for Don who could not make it. During the council report I brought up the tree nursery to make sure the Rec Commission was aware of it. It was not on their agenda for that meeting nor was it made obvious that it would be voted on at any future meeting, but they did say they wanted to discuss it sometime in the future. They also said they were planning on getting a presentation from Ray and possibly other members of the Shade Tree, so I knew this was not the last time they would be hearing about it and that DSTC would have an opportunity to discuss it with them. Regardless, I am looking into whether there are meeting minutes from the vote that allegedly occurred. I am also waiting to hear back from the borough administrator and attorney on Rec's authority over Parks. Hoping I will have more info later today or early tomorrow"

So, the nursery was installed at Arboretum North. 45 pots, will be mesh fencing, clean fill from Lupardis.

Volunteers at the site were: Abbie Slaman, Ray Slaman, Tom Fisichella, Tara Barker, Rachel Bunin, Sally Tayeb, Bill Zitelli, and Kathleen Sheridan

## 8. Education

- Tom and Ray went to Cherry Hill conference Strength of trees in Landscape
- Dumont is recognized as a leader in Shade Trees in NJ

## Regular Business

### 9. Tree Maintenance

- Minor outstanding issues
- Abbie, Tom, and Ray are handling the permits
- 125 permits issued in 2017 Money going to the Shade Tree fund so good outcomes from

permits we saved some trees

10. Update from FOTST – meeting, fundraising, activities and projects

11. Adopt-A-Tree – Plan for Fall

- Planted 11 trees. we need more solicitors—try for 20-30 in Spring

a. Johnny and Janey Appleseed recruits

12. Other Open Business

Tom F: motion to close 9pm | Tanya Second.