

Dumont Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes
June 15th 2015 7:30pm Dumont Arboretum Gazebo, West Shore Ave

Present: Ray Slaman, Kathy Sheridan-Parrish, Mike Kuhn (via phone), Abbie Slaman, Sally Tayeb

Guest: Irwin Buchheister, Larry Buchheister, Don Morrell, Council Liaison

Absent: Larry Tobias, Tom Fisichella

Abbie makes a motion to begin the meeting. Kathy seconds. Meeting is called to order at 7:37pm

1. **Review prior meeting minutes-** Ray proposes that we accept the meeting minutes for February, March, April and May as written. Abbie seconds. Proposal passes.
2. **Discussion of homeowner issues-** Larry Buchheister and Irwin Buchheister are in attendance to discuss a town tree at 55 Roxbury Road. The Homeowner would like the tree trimmed. He has put in requests and so far the trimming has not happened. Ray states that he sent the request today to the DPW and sometime in the next two weeks they will do the trimming. Ray does say that depending on the extent of the wires in the trees PSEG could have jurisdiction on the trimming. Irwin Buchheister expresses a concern that the sidewalk is pushed up. Ray explains that the Dumont town code states that it is the homeowner's responsibility to manage their sidewalks. Mr. Buchheister states that he believes that there has been an instance in town where the town fixed a private sidewalk. Kathy says that without knowing the specifics we couldn't comment on it. If he could bring the facts of the instance we could look into it. Abbie says that during the last 10 years of the Commissions existence when town trees were planted root guards were used to lessen the impact on sidewalks. Don says he will check on precedents for sidewalk repair.
3. **Arboretum Event-** Dumont : Riding the Rails through History
 - a. **Recap and lessons learned-** Ray states that it was a successful event. Kathy says that she is holding some money from book sales and sales at Kids Crossing. If we did it again she says she would like to see a central place for money. The way it was done was very confusing. She thought the event was wonderful. Everyone seemed to enjoy all the displays. Abbie mentions that her parents came from North Carolina and are Railroad people and they felt there was a lot to see and do. She says for future events maybe the story time and movies should be in different spaces. Their individual audio competed with each other. Sally says she would like

to see the spacing between displays tightened, closer together. She states that she has money from Garden Club sales that will be earmarked later at a Friends of the Shade Tree meeting. There is also Stumpy money that will go toward the Scholarship. Tara has the box of exit surveys. Ray says he will review them and let everyone know the comments from the attendees.

- b. **Promoting Arboretum space to wider community**-Rachel has brought up the idea in an email to encourage others to use the Arboretum space. It is a nice space centrally located that would lend itself to events. Ray asks Don if he could help get the word out to different groups in town that the Arboretum space is available. Sally brings up another event that could happen this year might be a program put on by the NJ Audubon Society. It could be September/October and possibly all we would need to do is publicity. Don suggests a car show. He says they draw in a lot of people.

4. Arboretum

- a. **Discussion of theft prevention**- The bench that was stolen was recovered and has been installed back in the Arboretum. Ray will do etching/engraving on benches etc. to aid in identifying ownership of the items in the event of theft. Sally brings up the possibility of enlisting a resident near the Arboretum and installing some sort of camera/computer program that would monitor the Arboretum Space. Mike will look for programs that may be useful. Don will check into security and surveillance and signs from the town.
- b. **Arboretum Maintenance**- Sally has the Maintenance report for this month. She says the Arboretum is in pretty good shape. There are some trees that could use some light pruning and there are two stumps that Tom has told her will be removed once the DPW has been trained on the stump grinder. She has a concern on how to get a handle on the weeds in the flower beds. Ray says that he, Tom and Joe Ulrich were at the Arboretum discussing pruning. They pruned all the adopt a trees from Arbor Day. The Heritage trees still need pruning. They pulled back mulch that was piled too close to the root collars of the trees. Sally would like to remove the bottom set of branches from the space tree. Ray hesitates as the branches are so sparse and the energy needs of the tree need to be met. He says maybe he will have Joe Ulrich take a look and advise.

5. Proposal for Arboretum Expansion-

- a. **Discuss Tom's idea for "Arboretum South"**- Tom is absent but has sent along with Ray a drawing/blueprint of an idea for Sorosis Park. The drawing is passed around. It shows upgrades to play area, benches, plantings, flag pole etc. Kathy asks Don to

clarify that parks fall under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Commission and Don confirms that anything dealing with parks should go thru them. All feel it is an interesting idea that would need further research.

6. **Community Outreach and communication-**

- a. **Newsletter update**-Rachel is not in attendance. She has sent out a draft of the summer newsletter for everyone to look at.
- b. **Website, social media**- Tom is not in attendance but has sent an idea thru Ray to sell leftover Railroad items on the website. Mike will catch up with Tom on this idea.

7. **Friends of the Shade Tree update**-Sally reports that the group is now officially on the NJ State Charity listing. This will help with grant applications. She asks, what should the date of the next Friends meeting be? She will send out an email to get feedback for date of next meeting. Ray gives feedback about the new members of the Friends group. He says the “bucket brigade” and garden club members have been a great asset to the Arboretum. They have done a wonderful job with the flowers and watering in the garden areas. Sally would like to add a thank you page to the Friends website. Everyone should contribute names of those who have volunteered.

REGULAR BUSINESS

8. **Tree Maintenance**-Tom sent a note. Inspections are up to date. 55 Roxbury Ave is now on the list for work. Ray brings up an issue at 45 Bedford, a town tree where the homeowner wants removal. Joe Sherban, DPW Arborist, has looked at the tree. It is healthy and not a candidate for removal. Ray as explained to the homeowner the “removal for convenience” option.

9. **Town Council Ordinance-**

- a. **Permit update**-Ray says there have been more permits with the warmer weather. Kathy brings up that she would like to have the procedure for permits gone over again. There are two new people in the building department. She wants to nail down the details so that we are all on the same page and can give correct information to residents. Ray will review the process with Steve and pass it along to Kathy.
- b. **New ordinance language and fines for violations**- There is a discussion on new language to add to the ordinance for consequences for not getting a permit. Don asks what the consequences are as it stands now. It is explained that there is no specific language. Abbie brings up that if you don’t have a permit for a new roof or

hot water heater there is a consequence. We need specific language to spell it out. Don will bring the idea to the council. Kathy brings up that often the permit form is not completely filled out. At times there is not a diagram of tree location, phone number or contractor/insurance information. Sally feels it is important to have insurance is a tree is being taken down. Abbie says we have been very proactive to publicize the ordinance to residents and contractors. Ray will follow up.

10. **Summer Schedule**- The August meeting will be at the Arboretum Gazebo.

11. **Other**- Everyone should think about Winter Seminar ideas and date. Also keep in mind Dumont Day. It will be here soon. Kathy says next meeting she would like to lay down a time line for Arbor Day 2016 Art Contest.

Mike makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Abbie seconds. Meeting ends at 8:53pm

