

The Tree Commission Meeting for the City of New Castle took place on June 7, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the City of New Castle's Town Hall.

Members Present: Chip Patterson, Chairperson
Susan Keyser, Co-Chairperson
Erv Thatcher
John Lloyd
Mark Miller*
Nancy Coning*
Tom Truman

Members Absent: Toby Hagerott**
Fran Peden

*Arrived at 5:45 p.m.

**Reappointment pending in City Council.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Patterson at 5:35 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Approval of Minutes – Mr. Thatcher made a motion to approve the 5/3/10 minutes. Mr. Truman seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

MEMBERS REPORT

Erv Thatcher – He asked if anyone had looked at the tree at 530 Delaware Street near the Methodist Church. Mr. Patterson said he took Steve Samluk (Tree, Inc.) there to look at the tree but failed to see what Mr. Thatcher had reported. Mr. Patterson instructed Tree, Inc. to connect with Mr. Thatcher. Between 5th and 6th Streets on Harmony Street there are number of low-hanging maple trees that should be looked at.

Susan Keyser – A tree in front of Mr. Chamberlain's home on Second Street appears to be dead. She suggested talking to Mrs. Chamberlain before taking the tree out. Following up on the elm treatment cycle, when she got the quote she learned this is the second year of the three-year cycle we are in. The Tree Commission chose to do elm treatments on a three-year cycle. Does Henry Poole, State Forester, have an opinion about a two or three-year cycle? Bartlett's suggested a two-year cycle. We can defer this matter until next year when we have a better idea of funding. Since it has been determined by Henry Poole that the elm tree on Battery Park was hit by lightning and is not diseased, the treatment is not as urgent. Mr. Miller agreed that we should limit expenditures at this time.

Mr. Miller made a motion not to accept the bid received for elm treatment but notify Bartlett's that we will revisit next year. Ms. Keyser seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Nancy Coning – Nothing to report.

Tom Truman – Tree, Inc. did a nice job trimming 134 E. Second Street. The branches were trimmed off the house and some of the lower branches were also trimmed. There are two maple trees that sit in front of a house between 5th and 4th Streets. Branches on those trees are very low and should be addressed. He has noticed several trees in town that have ivy growing up them. He asked if it would be a good idea to ask residents to remove ivy from their trees. He cited a sycamore tree on Second Street that had a lot of ivy on it and it was lost in a big wind.

Ms. Keyser said she has spoken to Russ Carlson about ivy on trees. He stated that older, more mature trees can handle ivy on them. She also noted that the box of ivy placed around the base of the tree that Mr. Truman cited may have incurred some root damage when the box was installed. This is speculation. *(Discussion followed about the affects of ivy on trees.)*

John Lloyd – Received a call from a resident requesting to have two Zelkova trees in front of her home trimmed (limbs and leafy areas) so her view is better. *(Discussion followed.)* Ms. Keyser said that many of the Zelkovas that we planted were low-branching and trimming these trees is the right thing to do.

There is a sycamore that is almost dead in the park across the street from the 600 block of Clymer Street.

Mr. Lloyd continued his report stating there is a large number of Bradford pear trees causing problems with sidewalks. He noted a Zelkova tree in front of the courthouse that is dead on the top. Removing the dead wood wouldn't make the tree look right. He suggested removal of all Zelkova trees with this condition.

Mr. Lloyd showed pictures of 609 West 11th Street. He talked to Dave Stewart who said the roots are affecting the foundation at 609 and the driveways at 609 and 611. Mr. Patterson said there is no way to deal with this issue without taking the tree. We have discouraged putting trees in small areas such as between the sidewalk and curb.

Mark Miller – Reported that a resident removed a tree without conferring with the Tree Commission. The roots were invasive and affecting the sewer line.

Mr. Patterson reminded that he has distributed information to Commission members on how to address residents who have sewer-related issues and what the County laws are concerning sewers. Generally the problem is that the sewer line is broken. If it is in the County's portion of the sewer (between the street and main), and if you follow the procedures outlined in the County Code, they will replace the sewer if needed. Specific guidelines must be followed. It was believed that the young tree in question was planted by this body and has been there for about five years.

Research will be done to determine who planted the tree. If the Tree Commission planted the subject tree it was an investment and restitution for the value of the tree will be sought. The tree ordinance prohibits removal of these trees by residents. It was also noted that if the resident hired a contractor to remove the tree, that contractor would be required to have a permit to do work in the City. Mr. Miller did inform the resident that she wasn't permitted to cut the tree down and that this was a serious matter. The resident indicated she was not requesting another tree in its place.

Mr. Patterson suggested that Tree Commission members visit the site to see what was done. Mr. Miller noted that it is important to have enforcement when rules have been violated. He believes the resident made a mistake in this case so fines may not be appropriate. (*Discussion continued.*) Mr. Patterson reiterated that when the Tree Commission plants a tree, part of the planting involves an agreement from the resident to help nurture and support the tree. We make the initial investment and he believes the Tree Commission is owed the value of the tree that was removed at the very least. Path forward will be decided upon once it is confirmed the Tree Commission planted the subject tree.

Outreach Committee Meeting – Mr. Patterson provided a history to date of this body's attempts to speak to this committee about our purpose and funding. He attended a Council meeting to speak to them about the budget. He informed them that the Tree Commission is pursuing the Trustees about funding but does not know what will happen. We have received \$20,000 funding from the Trustees in the past and we requested \$25,000 this year to fund a forester (\$5,000) but we recognize things are lean at this time and we would be content with receiving \$20,000 until things are better financially. The City recognizes their obligation to fund the Tree Commission if the Trustees do not. He feels it is not logical to not get an audience with the Outreach Committee to discuss the matter. He will continue to work towards having this committee attend our July meeting. (*Extensive discussion took place concerning this issue.*)

Mr. Miller commented again that we should not spend any monies until we get this matter resolved. We need to keep a reserve in the event of storm event(s). Mr. Patterson doesn't see where we have an option for some of the tree issues mentioned tonight. We can't stop taking care of tree-related problems. Normal maintenance business of the Tree Commission has to continue.

All tree-related issues noted in our May meeting and tonight will be handled.

Grant Application -- Mr. Miller will be working on the application from the State for planting and maintenance monies in the near future. The application is due by 7/15/10. Three (3) bids are required along with a site plan. Ms. Keyser can provide information on where the trees on the Spring planting list are located.

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Manual – Ms. Keyser reported she would be in contact with Mr. Hagerott soon to start this process.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Turner
Stenographer