

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
June 4, 2018 – 4 p.m.
New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Robinson, Chair
Tom Maddux
John Lloyd

Members Absent: Marco Boyce
John Antonio

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

Mr. Robinson called for a roll call.

Minutes – A motion was made to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2018, meeting as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.

New Applications

File #2018-06 – Gregory Minton, 804 Clayton Street

An application was submitted by Mr. Gregory Minton of 804 Clayton Street to prune a tree on his property. Mr. Robinson stated that he had viewed the tree and agreed it needed to be pruned. Mr. Lloyd noted that three trees on Clayton Street (804, 810 or 812, and 816) needed to be pruned.

A Motion was made to recommend that the three Zelcova trees on Clayton Street was made and seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

File #2018-07 – Sandra J. McCracken, 100 West 7th Street

An application was submitted by Ms. Sandra McCracken to remove an evergreen tree. Mr. Robinson asked if the tree was on private property or City property. Mr. Lloyd noted that other trees that sit farther back from the street are on City property.

A Motion was made to recommend that the evergreen tree be removed was made and seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mr. **Erv** Thatcher noted that a tree on 7th Street at Tremont Street blew down in the recent storm and needed to be trimmed or removed. He added that there are a number of other trees in the City that need to be trimmed or removed, noting that many of the trees were causing driving and traffic issues. Mr. Lloyd advised that some of the issues were the responsibility of the City Administration and the Street Department. He added that tree limbs that interfere with traffic signs should be cleared by the Street Department. After discussion, Mr. Robinson noted that the Commission could only act on issues that were presented in the form of a City Tree Work Permit Application. He requested that Mr. Thatcher submit an Application detailing the specific trees that he feels need to be pruned or removed. He added that the City has acted on all requests made by the Commission for which Applications were submitted.

Miscellaneous

Wood Borers - Mr. Robinson presented a branch from a Princeton Elm tree at Ms. McEwen's residence that was completely hollowed out by wood borers. He asked if this was unique to Elm trees. Mr. Lloyd

said it was not unique to Elm trees although wood borers favored Birch trees. He added that it was very difficult to deal with wood borers. Mr. Robinson contacted the State but has not received a reply yet. Mr. Robinson will get more information and report back to the Commission.

7th & South Streets – Mr. Robinson noted that pursuant to a recommendation made at the May 7th Commission meeting, Mrs. Octavio was presented with a choice of several tree species to be planted. She selected a Lilac tree, which was purchased by the Commission; however, the tree cannot be planted because it interferes with the Guidelines. Mr. Robinson will contact Ms. Octavio and advise her that a tree cannot be planted at that location, but if she wants to plant a bush or flowers, the Commission would have no objection.

Washington Street – Mr. Robinson noted that several of the Crepe Myrtles on Washington Street are dead. He added that the contractor has been contacted to look at them. After he hears back from the contractor, Mr. Robinson will advise the Commission of his findings.

8th Street – Mr. Lloyd has been in contact with Delmarva Power, and they do not want anything planted under the transmission lines; however, Delmarva does not know what the easement under the power lines is. They advised Mr. Lloyd that they discourage growth under power lines, but since this is not a rural area, they would tolerate plantings that grow no taller than 10 feet. Ms. Joan Smith is interested in filling in along the tract of land from South Street to Delaware Street. Mr. Andrew Bradbury would like to have planting to screen the railroad track. Mr. Lloyd feels that the Commission should be able to plant along the railroad right-of-way, bring it in 10-15' from the wild growth, then come forward toward the street and do more plantings of larger and smaller trees. He felt Norfolk Southern would not have any objection; however, Delmarva Power would object if something inappropriate is planted under the transmission lines. It still needs to be determined where the Delmarva easement is. Mr. Lloyd will set up a meeting with Delmarva, members of the Commission and interested residents. Mr. Maddux asked about funding for the project, and Mr. Robinson explained that the Commission would make a recommendation to City Council, and funding would be included in the Budget. He added that the project could be done in stages. In a further discussion of the plantings, Mr. Lloyd said he would recommend a combination of evergreens and deciduous trees. The Commission would like to see the project done, the residents want the project to proceed, and although it is a unique situation, the Commission has planted trees on private property before. Mr. Maddux asked if that tract could be incorporated into Parkland; however the tract in question is private property and the homeowners would have to agree to that. After discussion, it was suggested that Mr. Boyce be asked to create a Plan to present to the Commission for review. Mr. Robinson will reach out to Mr. Boyce.

Rt. 273 Speed Limit – Mr. Maddux asked if having the speed limit reduced to 35 mph had been rejected by the Police Department. Mr. Robinson clarified that after review by the Police Department; they determined speed was not a factor in accidents in that area. The decision to reduce the speed limit rests with DelDot; however, they will not make a recommendation without a traffic survey study, for which the City Council would have to pay.

14th & Washington Streets – Mr. Lloyd noted that a tree at 14th & Washington Streets is dead as a result of mowers and/or line trimming damaging the tree trunk. Mr. Robinson asked if under-watering was a factor and noted that tree was supposed to be planted in front of Wilmington Fibre. Mr. Lloyd reiterated that mowers and/or line trimming were a major contributing factor.

Volcano Mulching – Mr. Maddux distributed a draft of a letter regarding volcano mulching of trees in the City. The Commissioners reviewed the letter and recommended revisions. Mr. Maddux will edit the letter to incorporate the recommended revisions and forward a second draft to the Commissioners for review. Mr. Lloyd noted that proper mulching has been explained to MSC and Mr. George O'Neal's

staff, and that Mr. John Antonio has explained proper mulching to the crew several times; however, over mulching is still an issue. Mr. Robinson noted that new trees planted beyond Chestnut Street on Broad Dyke are mulched correctly.

There being no further business, Mr. Robinson asked for a Motion to adjourn the meeting.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 pm was made, seconded and approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer