

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
September 10, 2018 – 4 p.m.
New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: David Robinson, Chair
Marco Boyce
John Lloyd

Members Absent: Tom Maddux
John Antonio

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:59 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum was declared.

Minutes

A Motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2018, meeting as amended. The motion was seconded and approved.

Old Applications

File #2018-08 – 117 E. 3rd Street

Applicants Allison and Henry Tobey re-submitted their Application to have trees in front of their residence at 117 E. 3rd Street pruned. Mr. Robinson advised that the application had been approved at the July 2 meeting; however, the work has not been done as yet. He added that Mr. O’Neal was unclear on what needed to be done and that he will ask Mr. Barthel to speak with Mr. O’Neal at determine what the issue is so the job can be completed. Mr. Lloyd noted that there is old brush that had been cut for several weeks that needs to be removed.

New Applications

File #2018-13 – 145 E. 3rd Street

Mr. Rod Miller submitted an Application resolve an issue of birds defecating on the sidewalk, front step and handrail in front of his house. Mr. Boyce noted that he has had a similar issue with doves, and he sprays the tree with water in the evening after sunset, which seems to resolve the problem. The Commissioners agreed that the bird issue is not in the purview of the Tree Commission.

File #2018-14 – 32 W. 4th Street

Mr. Mark Miller submitted an Application to have trees across Foundry Street from 32 West 4th Street trimmed. Mr. Lloyd inspected the site, and advised the trees across from Mr. Miller’s house are weed Mulberry or Norway Maple trees that have grown up over time. Mr. Lloyd recommended that all the trees in that area be removed. Mr. Boyce agreed, and added that those tree species are invasive. Mr. Robinson added that there were between 8-12 trees in that location. After discussion, it was agreed that if the trees are removed, no new planting would be made because there is insufficient room.

A Motion to remove all weed trees in the area of Mr. Miller’s house was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Mr. Lloyd added that the work can be done by the City.

File #2018-15 – 727 Clayton Street

Mr. Daniel Plumley submitted an Application to remove a long-needle Pine at the dead end of Clayton Street and that all weeds by Electric Pole #14B77 and the right fence line of 108 West 7th Street be removed or pruned. Mr. Lloyd spoke with Mr. Furio Casale about the issue, and determined the tree Mr. Plumley is concerned about is a White Pine on the corner that appears to be on private property. Mr. Lloyd explained that the original property line appears to be an old fence-post which would put the Pine tree on private property. He added that no work can be done until ownership of the tree is determined. Mr. Robinson agreed, but added that the lower limbs could be pruned and Mr. Lloyd agreed the offending limb could be taken back to the trunk without damaging the tree. After discussion, it was agreed that the Commission cannot remove the tree until ownership is determined. Mr. Lloyd added that if the owners of the White Pine agree, the limb can be pruned; however, if they do not agree the Commission cannot act. Mr. Robinson advised that contacting the owners to determine if the tree is on private or city property would be up to Mr. Barthel. The Commissioners agreed that no action could be made by the Commission at this time.

File #2018-16 – 603 Tremont Street

An Application was filed by Robert and Jacqueline Raposa to have two trees that are hitting the roof and interfering with utility lines be removed. Mr. Robinson advised that Application 2018-16 is a duplicate of Application 2017-14 that was previously filed by Mr. and Mrs. Raposa. He added that the work had been done by MSC, and it did not appear any work was required at 603 Tremont. Mr. Lloyd agreed, but added that work was needed at 607 Tremont Street. After discussion, a recommendation was made that the entire block get attention and that most of the work be done by MSC. Mr. Robinson noted that he wanted to look at one small Norway Maple tree before he agreed to having it removed; however, pruning could be done. Mr. Lloyd identified the trees to be worked on and recommended that all the trees on the block be addressed by the Electric Company and the branch levels be raised up.

A Motion to prune all trees on the one side of the street from 6th to 7th Streets was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

File #2018-17 – 122 E. 2nd Street

Mr. Joseph Raposa submitted an Application to prune tree limbs that are hitting windows original to the house. Mr. Lloyd noted that the old brush that had been cut for several weeks that needs to be removed, which he originally identified as being at 117 E. 3rd Street, is actually at 122 E. 2nd Street. Mr. Robinson noted that it appeared someone had already pruned the branches, and Mr. Lloyd agreed. A recommendation was made to determine if the tree had been pruned correctly and if it has not been pruned correctly to have the work fixed. Mr. Lloyd added that it should also be determined if limbs are cleared from the house.

File #2018-18 – 534 Delaware Street

Ms. Nancy Hedges submitted an Application to have a tree removed and replaced to correct tree roots that are starting to reach the foundation of the property, and the owners are concerned of potential damage. Mr. Lloyd advised that tree roots were uplifting the sidewalk, but there is no evidence that the roots are affecting the house. Mr. Robinson stated that he had been advised that as a mature tree, roots that are put out would be small roots looking for water, and that the major roots that anchor the tree are already established.

Mr. Lloyd stated that he had no recommendation because it cannot be determined if there is any damage to the foundation. He added that the only visible physical evidence is the raising up of the sidewalk. Mr. Robinson advised that there is a copper sulfide treatment that can be injected next to the foundation that will stop the roots and Mr. Boyce added that was the same treatment used to kill the growing tree roots in sewer lines. Mr. Robinson clarified that the tree would not be harmed using this treatment. He added that

Michael Martini had advised that unless there is a crack in the foundation, tree roots will go around a solid object.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Commission could not act without physical evidence of damage, and that Mr. Barthel would be asked to contact the homeowners to see if any physical evidence of damage exists. Mr. Lloyd suggested that treating the foundation with copper sulfide should be considered. Mr. Robinson advised he would contact Pete Kingshill at Bartlet Tree Experts and Mr. Lloyd suggested that Mr. Robinson also contact Russ Carlson.

File 2018-19 – 49 W. 3rd Street

Ms. Marianne Caven submitted an Application to fix the sidewalk where tree roots are bringing up the bricks. Mr. Lloyd noted that the sidewalk was being affected at both 49 and 51 W. 3rd Street. Mr. Robinson suggested that he contact Ron Vukelich. Mr. Boyce asked if Mr. Vukelich notifies the City when he makes repairs to avoid duplication of effort if the Commission recommends work be done by the City. Mr. Robinson advised that Mr. Vukelich suggested the City assign someone from MSC to work with him to learn what he does so City workers are competent to make repairs that Mr. Vukelich does, and added that he will speak with Mr. Barthel.

A Motion that the Tree Commission ask Mr. Vukelich to address the concerns with 49 West 3rd Street was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

File #2018-20 – 1 The Strand

Dr. Joanne Viola submitted an Application to have low hanging branches on a tree at the NW corner of Delaware Street and The Strand pruned. Mr. Lloyd inspected the tree in front of #2 The Strand and advised the tree is a Princeton Elm with very poor crotch structure. Mr. Boyce noted that Princeton Elm trees will fail. Mr. Lloyd recommended that the Commission either have an arborist cable the tree, or have the tree removed. He added that if one of the crotches of the tree fails it could create significant liability for the City. Mr. Lloyd also noted that the tree is in the primary wires.

A Motion to have an arborist inspect the Princeton Elm tree to see if it can be fixed was made, seconded and approved.

File #2018-21 – 5 West 10th Street

An Application was filed by Guido Deascani to have two Sycamore trees removed. The Commissioners did not have an opportunity to investigate the Application prior to the meeting, and no discussion or action could be made at the present time.

Miscellaneous

5th Street – Mr. Robinson advised that a homeowner had requested a dead tree be removed and a new tree planted, and had donated \$100 to have the tree replaced. Mr. Robinson had asked her to review the list of acceptable small/medium trees, and she chose a long-leaf Linden, which Mr. Robinson advised was not an appropriate species. She then suggested a Golden Rain tree, and after discussion, the Commissioners agreed that was an acceptable species. Mr. Robinson will notify the homeowner.

Recent Plantings on Rt. 9 – Mr. Robinson noted that the new plantings on Rt. 9 look very good. Mr. Boyce suggested some tree pits by the apartment buildings on the other side of the street. Mr. Robinson noted there was no room; however Mr. Boyce said it looked like there was 5’-6’. He asked if any of the Commissioners had seen the plans and Mr. Lloyd noted that according to the City Code, plans should not be approved unless the Tree Commission is involved with planting. Mr. Robinson added that one tree is leaning, and he will ask MSC to straighten it.

Japanese Hornbeam – Mr. Robinson noted that the Japanese Hornbeam trees planted next to the cemetery are not looking healthy regardless of the excellent job the City has done watering trees through the summer.

Harmony Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets – Mr. Robinson asked if the Commission should remove the trees, and a recommendation was made to have MSC remove the trees and grind the stumps. Mr. Robinson noted that the trees are heaving up the sidewalk. Mr. Robinson added that the property is State owned and that he had spoken with Cindy Snyder at the Courthouse to notify her of what the Commission is planning. Ms. Snyder advised she would contact the State's horticulture people. Mr. Lloyd noted that the trees belong to the City, and Mr. Robinson added that he had advised Ms. Snyder the Commission was going ahead with the work. After discussion, it was agreed to have the five trees removed this fall and replaced with six Trident Maple trees.

A Motion to have the City remove five trees at Academy Wall along Harmony Street between Market Street and 3rd Street, and replace them with six Trident Maple trees was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

221 Harmony Street – Mr. Robinson noted there is a Zelkova Tree that is almost dead at 221 Harmony Street. Mr. Lloyd suggested that the tree be removed and replaced with a Trident Maple as well. After discussion, it was agreed to amend the Motion for Harmony Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets to add the removal of the Zelkova tree at 221 Harmony Street. It was agreed to discuss with the homeowner what species of tree should replace the Zelkova tree.

A Motion to amend the Motion previously adopted to read A Motion to have the City remove the five trees along the wall on Harmony Street between Market Street and 3rd Street and replace them with six Trident Maple trees, and to remove a Zelkova tree at 221 Harmony Street was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Courthouse Trees – Mr. Lloyd asked for an update on the trees in front of the Courthouse. Mr. Boyce noted that at last month's Planning Commission Meeting Mr. David Athey made a presentation on changes to the streetscape on Delaware Street, and there is a meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 13, to walk Delaware Street to see what the possibilities are. He added that tree plantings will not be the primary focus, but will be about fixing the sidewalk and curbing for parking and pedestrian accessibility. Mr. Boyce obtained a copy of the base layout and sketched some plantings on top of it. He felt it should be designed together and not piece-meal. Mr. Lloyd asked if the sewer was going to be fixed, and Mr. Boyce advised that would be done first, and that he had mentioned including a conduit for future underground wires so the sidewalks would not have to be torn up twice.

During discussion, Mr. Boyce noted that parking needs to be regularized and all stakeholders need to weigh in on the discussions. Mr. Boyce noted that The Weekly showed several potential design options that were presented at the public meeting, including a traffic circle and making parallel parking. Mr. Boyce added that parallel parking would remove quite a few parking spaces, and he felt the number of parking spaces should to be maintained. The Commission discussed various options to increase parking.

Mr. Boyce testified at the Planning Commission Meeting that a formalized space in front of the Town Hall was important and he suggested removing the parking spaces in front of Town Hall to open up the facade of the building.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Commission should defer making any decisions about the Courthouse trees until all plans have been finalized. Mr. Lloyd noted that some of the design options would interfere with truck deliveries in the area, and Mr. Boyce stated that without parking in front of

Town Hall, a 60' truck can do a turn even if there were a circle. He added that most delivery trucks to the area would be WB60 and smaller.

Rt. 273 – Mr. Lloyd asked for an update on the trees on Rt. 273, and neither Mr. Robinson nor Mr. Boyce had heard anything.

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

A Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:03 pm was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Kathy Weirich
Stenographer