

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
January 8, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard

Members Present: Carl Benson, Chair
Art Walker
Wolcott Davis
Alice Riehl

Absent: Scot Savitch

Also Present: Furio Casale, Code Enforcement Officer
Norman Lehr

Mr. Benson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2023, Tree Advisory Commission meeting as presented was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Old Business:

Relisted Application: 117 East 2nd Street

Mr. Benson stated that the application was concerning a large Catalpa tree and whether the City is responsible for the tree or will help take care of it. The tree is on private property. Mr. Benson spoke with the Mayor and City Council President as to whether the City Solicitor could investigate ownership. He added that Mayor Leary had opined that there might be a connection with the University of Delaware, but that is not certain. There have been no updates on this matter. Mr. Benson noted that the property owner is concerned about the safety of the tree.

STATUS: TBD. Waiting for updates from the Mayor and City Council President.

Applications 2022-000 and 2023-02 – 907 Gray Street

Mr. Casale stated that the initial request was to remove the tree; however, it was determined that only the overhanging branches were to be trimmed. An estimate has not been received yet.

STATUS: These applications are on the City Tree List for trimming and Mr. Casale is waiting for an estimate.

Application 2023-10 – Behind 400 Delaware Street

Mr. Casale stated that the tree should be removed within the next 2-3 weeks.

STATUS: Work should be completed within the next 2-3 weeks.

Application 2023-16 – Kathy Walsh – 172 East 4th Street

Mr. Casale stated that this is on the City Tree List to be trimmed. He thought the City would be doing the work.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List to be trimmed.

Application 2023-17 – City Post Office

Mr. Casale stated this is on the City Tree List to be removed by Public Works.

STATUS: This on the City Tree List to be removed.

Application 2023-18 – Edward Hitchens – 130 East 4th Street

Mr. Benson will follow up with Mr. Vukelich to see if the tree pit has been enlarged.

STATUS: Mr. Benson will follow up with Mr. Vukelich.

Application 2023-19 – James Allen – 23 East 5th Street

Mr. Casale stated this is on the City Tree List to be removed.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List to be removed.

Application 2023-21 – Shannell DeBright – 912 Clayton Street

Mr. Lear inspected the tree and did not see any reason that the tree needs to be removed. There is a large branch that fell that needs to be cleaned up, and the tree needs to be trimmed. Mr. Casale stated that the debris has been cleaned up and he will have the City inspect the tree to see if they can do the work.

STATUS: Mr. Casale to follow up with Public Works.

Application 2023-23 – William Blest – 130 East 3rd Street

Mr. Casale stated that this has been completed.

ACTION: Work completed. Application can be closed.

Application 2023-24 – Joanne Viola – Battery Park

The tree is not a City tree and the Application was denied.

ACTION: Application denied. Application can be closed.

Application 2023-25 – Susan Sylva – 501 West 11th Street

Mr. Casale is waiting on a quote.

STATUS: Waiting for receipt of an estimate.

Application 2023-26 – Janie Stephano – 26 West 6th Street

Mr. Casale stated that the City will prune the tree.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List to be pruned.

Application 2023-27 – Maureen Mulrooney – 50 West 4th Street

Mr. Casale stated this is on the City Tree List to be removed.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List to be removed.

Application 2023-28 – Ron Stach & Doug Hoffman

Mr. Benson stated that the tree was removed and replaced.

ACTION: Work completed. Application can be closed.

Application 2023-29 – Thomas J. Moran – 520 Harmony Street

Mr. Casale stated that the tree was removed on November 17th.

STATUS: Tree removed. Replacement tree has not been planted.

Application 2023-30 – Joanne Viola – 1 The Strand

Mr. Benson stated that the tree was removed and a new tree replanted.

ACTION: Tree removed and replaced. Application can be closed.

Application 2023-31 – William Robert Short – 101 East 3rd Street

Mr. Casale stated that this is on the City Tree List to be pruned.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List to be pruned.

Application 2023-32 – Janna Smith – 124 East 4th Street

Mr. Benson will follow-up with Mr. Vukelich.

ACTION: Mr. Benson will follow-up with Mr. Vukelich.

Application 2023-33 – Dr. Pad – 222 Chestnut Street

Mr. Casale stated that the tree was removed on November 16h.

STATUS: Tree removed. Replacement tree has not been planted.

Application 2023-34 – Kalita MacElree – 21 Holcomb Lane

Mr. Casale stated that this is on the City Tree List for removal and replacement.

STATUS: This is on the City Tree List for removal and replacement.

New Business:

Application 2023-35 – Alison Ellicott – Italian Memorial West 8th and South Streets

Mr. Benson stated that the Italian Heritage Foundation is requesting to have Red Bud trees at the site of the Italian Memorial that are in decline be removed and replaced. Mr. Benson sent the group a list of approved trees for consideration. Mr. Benson noted that the railroad originally owned the property and at some point the State took over control. Through Senator Poore control of the area was given to the City, who gave the Foundation permission to put up the memorial. Mr. Casale confirmed that State still owns the site.

Mr. Turtelli stated that the Italian Heritage Foundation did not plant the Red Bud trees. The memorial was put there in 2017. Mr. Turtelli confirmed that the property is state owned, and added that he submitted a copy of the agreement between the State Department of Transportation and the Italian Heritage Foundation to Mr. Bergstrom. The authorization in the agreement is for a parcel 100' x 200' within the triangle, and the trees are not within that area. Mr. Turtelli stated that if the City is willing to remove the trees, the Foundation will have the stumps removed. Mr. Casale will check to see if the City maintains the triangle.

During discussion Ms. Ellicott noted that the Markell Trail has gotten very overgrown. Mr. Casale noted that the City did clean up the Trail over the summer and the area at 11th Street is on the City Tree List to be cleaned up.

Mr. Turtelli offered to contact the Department of Transportation to see if they are agreeable to having the trees removed and will email Mr. Benson with the result of his discussion. Mr.

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Benson stated that if it is confirmed that the City maintains the area, the TAC can move forward to have everything taken care of. Mr. Turtelli will also ask about the trees on the Markell Trail when he speaks with the Department of Transportation.

STATUS: Mr. Casale will confirm whether the City maintains the triangle. Mr. Turtelli will reach out to the Department of Transportation to see if they have any objection to having the Red Bud trees removed and will report back to Mr. Benson. Mr. Turtelli will also discuss the Markell Trail with the Department of Transportation.

Member Comments/Discussion:

Mr. Benson noted that most items listed on the Agenda have been taken care of and that the City Tree Inventory is an ongoing project.

Tree City USA – Mr. Benson reported that the Tree City USA signs have been installed at both entrances to the City.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Benson called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously carried and the meeting ended at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer