

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
November 4, 2024 – 5:00 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard

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

Also Present: Norman Lehr

Mr. Benson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Riehl to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Savitch and unanimously passed.

Old Business / Tabled Applications / Old Applications

Application 2024-11 – 17 West 4th Street – Lillian Shue

An application was submitted to have the historic hitching post in front of her home removed and replaced when the stump is ground.

Mr. Benson reported that the stump grinding has been put out to bid. He added that all applications regarding stump grinding were submitted to Mr. Delgado to be put out for bid.

ACTION: The stump grinding was put out for bid. Include Application 2024-11 as Old Business on the December agenda.

Application 2024-13 – 104 West 6th Street – Fred Wright

An application was submitted to have seven (7) Sycamore trees pruned.

Mr. Benson requested that Mr. Delgado obtain a quote on that job. No update was available.

ACTION: Add Application 2024-13 as Old Business on the December agenda.

2024-14 – 54 East 4th Street – Tanasi Baldet

An application was submitted to have a tree pruned.

Mr. Benson reported that the Ash tree was moved to the City Tree List for removal and it has been removed.

ACTION: Close Application 2024-14.

2024-18 – 1002 Young Street – Charlotte Robertson

An application was submitted to have a Pine tree that is dropping pine cones on cars pruned.

Mr. Walker reported that the subject tree is not a City tree. A letter will be sent to Ms. Robertson. During discussion it was noted that the tree is on the Bike Path and had been previously limbed up.

ACTION: Close Application 2024-18

2024-19 – 16 Dalby Alley – Gregory Brown

An application was submitted to have a large Pin Oak tree pruned.

Mr. Walker reported that the subject tree is located in Battery Park. Mr. Benson opined that Battery Park is City property; but the City does not trim trees in Battery Park. Mr. Benson will notify Mr. Brown.

ACTION: Close application 2024-19

2024-20 – 615 Delaware Street – Cherry Tree Plaza condo Association

An application was submitted to have two (2) trees removed.

Mr. Walker reported that section of Delaware street where the trees are located is State property. Mr. Lehr stated that one of the trees was removed. Mr. Benson noted that TAC requested Public Works to obtain an estimate; however, the tree was removed. Mr. Benson will investigate that matter. He added that the property owner wanted the tree removed and the City has removed one and heavily trimmed the second; opining that it appears the second tree will also be removed by the City.

ACTION: Mr. Benson will research the matter with Mr. Delgado. Close Application 2024-20.

2018-13 – 124 East 3rd Street – Rod Miller

Mr. Benson stated that Mr. Miller submitted an application to have a tree removed. Mr. Miller noted that a tree at 117 East 3rd Street was recently removed and he wants his tree removed. Mr. Benson added that TAC approved trimming the tree, which was done.

Mr. Benson went on to provide background on the matter, noting that TAC approved trimming a Bradford Pear tree at 115 East 3rd Street; however, in the process, Mr. Delgado contacted MSC because wires were involved, and MSC removed the tree next to it at 117 East 3rd Street.

Application 2018-13 will be added to the December agenda as Old Business.

ACTION: Add Application 2018-13 as Old Business on the December agenda.

New Business

2024-23 – 520 Harmony Street – Thomas “Tim” Moran

An application was submitted to have three (3) trees trimmed. Mr. Moran explained that two of the trees are on the St. Peter’s side of the street and one is on the other side of the street. The tree across the street from St. Peters School is interfering with wires, and the two trees in front of St. Peters School are dropping debris and clogging the storm drains.

Mr. Benson suggested that the trees be heavily trimmed.

A motion to have one (1) Zelcova tree at 518 Harmony Street and two (2) Maple trees located across the street on Harmony Street be trimmed back was made by Ms. Riehl. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion was unanimously carried.

ACTION: Add one (1) Zelcova tree at 518 Harmony Street and two (2) Maple trees across the street on Harmony to the City Tree List for trimming.

2024-24 – 159 Casimir Drive – Milton Bilecki

An application was submitted to remove one (1) Bradford Pear tree that is dead at the top and is blocking light from a newly installed lamppost. No replacement is requested.

Mr. Davis stated that the tree does appear to be dead at the top. Mr. Savitch opined that if the tree is removed another tree should be replanted. Mr. Lehr opined that if the top is dead, the tree should be removed and concurred that a new tree should be replanted.

A motion to approve removal of one (1) Bradford Pear tree located at 159 Casimir Drive and that an approved species of tree be replanted within a reasonable distance from the lamppost was made by Mr. Savitch. The motion was seconded by Ms. Riehl. The motion was unanimously carried.

ACTION: Add one (1) Bradford Pear located at 159 Casimir Drive to the City Tree List for removal. An approved species of tree will be replanted within a reasonable distance from the lamppost.

2024-25 – 69 West 4th Street – Monica Callahan

An application was submitted to prune a tree that is impeding on the property owner’s house.

A motion to approve trimming of a tree located at 69 West 4th Street was made by Ms. Riehl. The motion was seconded by Mr. Savitch. The motion was unanimously carried.

ACTION: Add a tree located at 69 West 4th Street to the City Tree List for trimming.

2024-26 – 308 Moore Avenue – David DiAngelo

An application was submitted to prune six (6) Cherry trees along 14th Street that have limbs growing into the street and that block Stop signs.

During discussion it was noted that it appears the trees have been nicely shaped. Mr. Savitch suggested that the trees be inspected.

A motion to table Application 2024-26 pending inspection was made by Mr. Benson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Riehl. The motion was unanimously carried.

ACTION: Application 2024-26 tabled to the December meeting.

Member Comments / Discussion

Budget Report

Ms. Riehl reported that two invoices were paid in October for a total of \$8,840.00. There is one \$2,650 outstanding invoice for Brandywine Valley for stumps and trimming that has not been completed.

Ms. Riehl noted that the balance at October 1st was \$31,276, and deducting the paid and outstanding invoices the balance at October 31st should be \$22,436. However, the balance in the account is \$18,786, which is a difference of \$986. Ms. Riehl opined that the difference could be the cost of security for TAC meetings.

Mr. Benson noted that a proposal for the Beautification Committee will be submitted to the City Administrator for review.

Mr. Benson will get an update on work to be done by Brandywine Valley.

Resolution to Split the Budget Between Tree Planting and Tree Removal

Ms. Riehl read a draft Resolution to split the TAC budget equally between Tree Planting and Tree Removal.

During discussion Mr. Savitch stated that City Council said that TAC should bring any major issues that cannot be covered by the TAC budget to Council for consideration.

A motion to approve presenting the Draft Resolution to the City Administrator and City Council was made by Mr. Benson. The motion as seconded by Ms. Riehl. The motion was unanimously carried.

Ms. Riehl will speak with Council President Souder and Ms. Tantillo.

Damaged Tree

Ms. Riehl noted that there is a young tree at the intersection of West 3rd Street and Delaware Street that appears to have been damaged and is hanging far over the street. The TAC members will inspect the tree for discussion at a future meeting.

Recognition

Mr. Benson thanked Mr. Savitch for his eight (8) years of service as a member of the Tree Advisory Commission.

Tree Advisory Commission
November 4, 2024

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Benson and seconded by Ms. Riehl. The motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer