

**Tree Advisory Commission
Community Room
New Castle City Police Station
1 Municipal Blvd., New Castle, DE 19720
Monday, April 6, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.**

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING STARTING TIME.

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Public Comments/Comments from the Floor

Old Business/Tabled Applications/Old Applications:

No Old Business/Tabled Applications/Old Applications at this time.

New Business/New Applications:

1. 2026-02 55 The Strand – Howie Cohen – Tree Planting Request

Member Comments/Discussion:

1. Budget Report.
2. 2026 Watering Plan.
3. 2026 Planting Plan.
4. Recommended Tree List
5. 2026-27 Budget Request
6. Delaware St. Tree Removal
7. Summary Report City Meeting (3/23/26)

Miscellaneous:

Posted: 3/30/2026

Note: This agenda as listed may not be considered in sequence. If you are unable to attend the meeting, questions and comments will be taken via email up to 3:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2026 at info@newcastlecity.delaware.gov.

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
February 2, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard

Members Present: Edward Ryan, Chair
Alice Riehl
Art Walker
Wolcott Davis

Absent: Linda Suskie

Also Present: Milt Draper, Code Enforcement Officer
Norman Lehr, Gateway Consultant

Mr. Ryan 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 of the minutes of the January 5, 2026, meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan and was unanimously passed.

Old Business

Application 2026-01 – Carl Pope & Dan Struble – 11-13 East 2nd Street – Remove and Replace
Mr. Ryan stated that the Sycamore tree was inspected prior to the January 5, 2026, meeting. At that time Mr. Ryan observed two bricks outside the tree pit that were raised that he felt could be reset. At the January TAC meeting the Commissioners came to the unanimous conclusion that the 8-year old Sycamore tree posed no discernable threat to people or property and the Application was unanimously denied. Mr. Ryan informed Mr. Struble of that decision on January 14th.

Subsequently, Mr. Struble reached out to the City office to request that the Application be reconsidered by TAC because the tree roots have caused the sidewalk to buckle and it is a danger to pedestrians, and Mr. Ryan was asked to bring the issue back to the Commissioners. Mr. Ryan contacted Mr. Struble to inform him that the Application would be reviewed at the February 2, 2026, TAC meeting. Mr. Struble was not in attendance.

Mr. Ryan stated that he stood by the TAC decision made in January. Ms. Riehl stated that she too stood by the TAC decision. During discussion it was noted that Mr. Struble expressed his concern with roots interfering with gas, sewer and water lines. Mr. Davis opined that unless the sidewalk becomes inaccessible to wheelchairs no action should be taken. Mr. Lehr added that the tree will probably not interfere with utility lines for 50 years; opining that it is not currently a tripping hazard.

Mr. Davis suggested that the tree pit could be expanded to accommodate the tree as it grows.

A motion was made by Ms. Riehl to reaffirm the Tree Advisory Commission's denial of Application 2026-01 at the January 5, 2026, meeting to have a Sycamore tree at 11-13 East 2nd Street removed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis and was unanimously passed.

ACTION: The denial of Application 2026-01 was reaffirmed. The application can be closed. Mr. Ryan will contact Mr. Struble to inform him of the TAC decision and suggest that the tree pit be enlarged to mitigate the issue with raised bricks.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

New Applications

No new City Tree Work Applications were submitted for the February meeting.

Member Comments/Discussion:

Budget Report

Ms. Riehl reported that in January \$125.36 was expended from the TAC budget for security at the January TAC meeting.

TAC budget balance to date: \$27,259.97

Ms. Riehl noted that the balance includes \$10,000 earmarked for the removal of Sycamore trees on 6th Street that was recommended by TAC. Mr. Ryan noted that the City is looking into this matter to determine if the trees might be the responsibility of DelDOT.

Beautification Committee

Mr. Ryan opined that Ms. Tantillo was hoping that TAC would become involved with the Beautification Committee as support for Ms. Benson. In response to a question from Ms. Riehl, Mr. Ryan stated his impression was that Ms. Tantillo is asking TAC to physically support the efforts of the Beautification Committee and that Public Works would support their efforts by supplying wheelbarrows and shovels. During discussion it was noted that the Beautification Committee and TAC are connected only through the Budget.

Mr. Ryan will ask Ms. Tantillo to be more specific regarding her suggestion that TAC supports the Beautification Committee and will report back at the March meeting.

2026 Watering Plan

Ms. Riehl suggested that Ms. Suskie inform TAC how much money is available from the community organization she mentioned at the January meeting to water trees. Mr. Ryan stated it is difficult to assess the need for watering until the number of trees that can be removed from the watering list in the spring is determined. He also opined that many residents are willing to water new trees in front of their homes. Mr. Davis stated that residents would need to have guidelines on how much and when to water those trees. Mr. Ryan will submit a public service announcement to The Weekly to educate the public on watering and ask for their help in watering trees planted at their homes.

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Mr. Lehr stated that for trees planted in the spring the tree bags should be filled every four (4) days from April through October, and possibly through November depending on the weather. Fall planting will be done in early October and watering should continue through October or November. Mr. Ryan stated that the watering list needs to be updated, noting that as of April 2025, 80 trees are on the list.

2026 Planting Plan

Mr. Ryan stated that he compiled a list of applications approving new trees; noting that only two locations have tree pits that are ready to receive a new tree. He added that most of the work to remediate tree pits (bagging grindings, preparing the tree pits, and fixing the bricks) had previously been done by volunteer hours, and TAC cannot count on that moving forward. Mr. Davis stated that eventually all that work will need to come from the TAC budget. During discussion, it was noted that replacement bricks are available in the City.

Mr. Ryan reviewed the species and locations of trees slated for spring planting. Fourteen (14) trees should be available: six (6) trees Gateway and eight (8) trees at the Read House Garden.

Miscellaneous

Snow – Mr. Davis noted that the snow piled very close to the new Oak trees planted at the triangle.

Grants – Mr. Ryan will research the Delaware Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Grant through the Department of Agriculture. The application deadline is February 27, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

Tree Care Seminar – Winterthur is hosting the Delaware Forest Service 11th Annual Arborist and Tree Care Seminar on February 23-24. Registration ends Sunday, February 22nd. Participants can attend one or both days and will be able to earn up to 11.5 International Society of Arboriculture Continuing Education Credits and up to two (2) Delaware Pesticide Credits. Mr. Ryan will pass this on to Ms. Tantillo as a recommended class for Public Works staff that works with tree trimming.

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

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Riehl. The motion was unanimously passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission
March 2, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard

Members Present: Edward Ryan, Chair
Art Walker
Linda Suskie

Absent: Wolcott Davis
Alice Riehl

Also Present: Milt Draper, Code Enforcement Officer
Norman Lehr, Gateway Consultant

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

Minutes – February 2, 2026

It was noted that a quorum of commissioners was not in attendance who were present at the February 2, 2026, TAC meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan to table the February 2, 2026 minutes to the April 2026 meeting due to a lack of a quorum of members in attendance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and was unanimously passed.

Public Comment

Car Benson

Mr. Benson stated that he had submitted a Tree Application; however, it was not submitted in time to be included on the Agenda for the March 2, 2026, meeting. In response to Mr. Benson's request to explain his application, Mr. Ryan gave Mr. Benson permission to explain this issue.

Mr. Benson explained that 10 branches from a White Pine tree on his property fell into Callahan Alley (aka Heidi's Alley). He reported the branches to Public Works and was told they would clear them from the alley. Mr. Benson contacted several tree contractors to have other loose limbs still hanging in the tree removed, and received several estimates of approximately \$2,000.00. Mr. Benson asked the Commissioners if the City would be willing to assist with the cost of removing those limbs.

Ms. Suskie read sections of the City Code, noting that §210.9 states "every property owner is responsible for maintaining trees on their property in a safe and healthy manner and to keep trees properly trimmed and pruned so as to avoid hazards to persons, property and other vegetation" and 140-15.D states "homeowners must keep trees trimmed so no branch hangs less than 7' above any sidewalk".

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Mr. Benson said that he read that if branches overhanging a neighbor's property fall onto that neighbor's property the neighbor is responsible for clearing them, which led him to think the city might assist with the cost of removing the limbs still hanging loose in his tree.

After discussion Mr. Ryan concurred that removal of the loose branches is Mr. Benson's responsibility.

Old Business

Grants – Mr. Walker stated that the deadline for applying for the Delaware Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Grant through the Department of Agriculture passed before TAC could submit an application. Mr. Ryan stated that he will tickle the 2026 calendar as a reminder in the fall to submit the application on time.

Beautification Committee – Mr. Ryan stated that he asked for clarification of what Ms. Tantillo specifically wanted the TAC to do regarding the Beautification Committee; however, he had not received a response from her yet. Discussion of the Beautification Committee will be removed from the Agenda for the April meeting.

Monthly Report – Mr. Ryan stated that during the monthly meeting with Ms. Tantillo:

- Discussion of the updated Tree List was to be added to the TAC Agenda.
- TAC requires assistance from Public Works to remove six trees on Delaware Street. Mr. Ryan will follow-up on this.

Old Applications

There were no old applications to review or discuss.

New Applications

No new applications were submitted.

Member Comments/Discussion:

Budget Report

In Ms. Riehl's absence, Mr. Ryan noted that \$125 for security was spent in the last month, leaving a budget balance of approximately \$27,000.00. He noted that \$10,000 had been added to the budget for the potential removal of six (6) Sycamore trees on 6th Street.

Mr. Ryan will present the TAC Annual Report to City Council at the March 10th Council meeting. He opined that no additional funding would be requested.

2026 Watering Plan / 2026 Planting Plan

Mr. Ryan reviewed the Tree Inventory and noted that approximately 80 trees are being watered. During discussion, Mr. Lehr opined more trees could be planted and watered in the fall if TAC has an outside watering source.

Regarding tree planting, Mr. Ryan noted that getting tree pits ready for planting is still an issue; noting that Mr. Davis had stated the cost of this work would have to come from the TAC budget. Mr. Ryan also stated that he was not certain if the volunteers who previously assisted with this

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work are licensed and insured, which would be a city requirement for hiring them to continue with tree pit preparation and/or work. A discussion of tree pit preparation ensued.

Mr. Ryan stated that he drafted an article for The Weekly to remind residents that new trees would be planted. A discussion of the amount and number of times each week the trees need to be watered ensued.

Mr. Ryan stated that 14 trees will be planted in the spring. Eight (8) will come from the Read House and six (6) were ordered from Gateway. Mr. Ryan explained the locations and species where those trees will be planted.

Ms. Suskie reviewed the City Tree List and recommendations for removing and adding specific species, noting that the list should be updated every few years. Mr. Lehr made several recommendations. During discussion Ms. Suskie noted that she will be doing a presentation for Master Gardeners on street-side trees. Mr. Ryan commended Ms. Suskie on her work on the Tree List. Mr. Lehr opined that regardless of whether a homeowner chooses a particular species the final decision of what tree is planted should rest with TAC. Ms. Suskie concurred. Mr. Lehr also opined that blocks should include clusters of like trees rather than a large variety of species.

Further discussion of the Tree List was deferred to the April meeting.

Mr. Lehr recommended that TAC research the cost of prepping and/or creating tree pits.

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

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Suskie and seconded by Mr. Walker. The motion was unanimously passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer



CITY TREE WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

CITY OF NEW CASTLE
25 MAR 11 PM 2:02

Tree Advisory Commission
City of New Castle
220 Delaware Street
New Castle, Delaware 19720
Phone: (302) 322-9801
Fax: (302) 322-9814

Date of Request:

File Number: 2025-

- Planting Permit
- Pruning Permit
- Removal and Replacement Permit
- Tree Pit modification or creation
- Other (Please Explain)

Applicant(s) Name: Howie Cohen
 Address: 55 The Strand New Castle
 Phone(s): 410 852 7786 Email: Cohenhowie@MAC.COM

Location/address of requested tree work: 55 The Strand
 Tree Location: Front Sidewalk Square

Number, species and size* of tree(s) to be **planted**: 1 Tree please

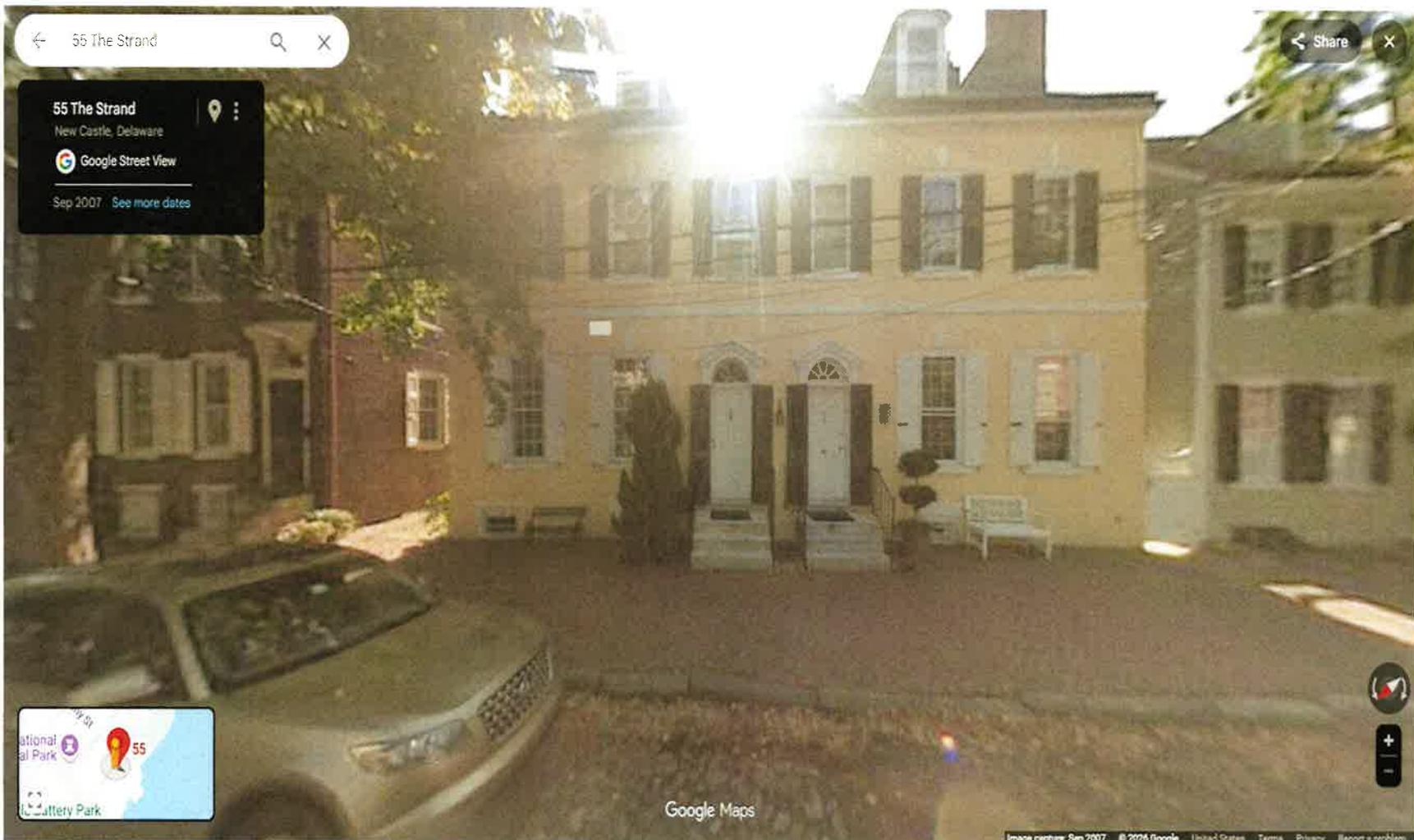
Number, species and size* of tree(s) requested to be **pruned****: _____
 Reason(s) for pruning request: _____

Number, species and size* of tree(s) requested for **removal****: _____
 Reason(s) for removal request (Please fill out your selection of replacement tree(s)): _____

All contractors must be approved and licensed by the City.
 Contractor's Name, Address, Phone Numbers: _____

Application is hereby made to conduct the operations described above. If a permit is granted, I/ we agree to have all work performed in accordance with all specifications, rules and standards set forth in Chapter 210, of the Code of the City of New Castle. All work must comply with all ISA and ANSI specifications.

Signature(s): Property Owner(s): [Signature]
 Applicant: Howie Cohen



← 55 The Strand 🔍 ✕

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New Castle, Delaware
🗺️ Google Street View
Sep 2007 [See more dates](#)



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