

February 6, 2008

JOINT SHADE TREE COMMISSION &
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2008, 6:30 P.M.
POTTSTOWN BOROUGH HALL

The Joint Pottstown Shade Tree Commission and Pottstown Borough Council meeting was called to order on Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Meeting Room Pottstown Borough Hall, 100 East High Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, with President Garner in the Chair.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present were Mark Gibson, Maureen Allen, Michael Wenzel, Stephen Toroney, Greg Berry, Jody Rhoads and David Garner. Also present were Solicitor Charles Garner, Borough Manager Raymond Lopez, Mayor Sharon Thomas and Human Resources Coordinator, Sandi Chieffo. Borough Secretary Virginia Takach was absent. Shade Tree Commission members present were Chairman Thomas Hylton, Kari Rising, Patty Fetterman, Sherry Sweeney and Jody Rhoads.

Solicitor Garner provided an overview of the Shade Tree Ordinance advising that the initial ordinance was adopted in 1954. He added that several minor amendments have been made to the Ordinance with the most recent in 2001. Mr. Garner also advised that the powers of the Shade Tree Commission are set by the Borough Code and the Commission has jurisdiction over Borough street trees and Borough owned trees, but not trees on private property. He added that by Ordinance the property owner is responsible for the maintenance of trees. Also by Ordinance, the Shade Tree Commission regulates the maintenance trimming, removal and replacement of these trees. The Commission may also issue permits to homeowners for the removal or maintenance of trees or seek reimbursement from the homeowner if the Commission takes necessary action by failure of the owner.

Mr. Hylton added that in 2001, the Shade Tree Commission adopted a policy regarding trees, which was also adopted by Borough Council. He also explained the appeals process included in the Policy. Mr. Hylton also noted that Trees, Inc. was formed in 1983 for the planting and maintenance of trees. He added that since 2001, Trees, Inc. has received a donation of approximately \$21,000 from the Borough for the maintenance of the 3,400 trees. The donation was not allocated in the 2008 budget.

Mr. Hylton reported that a new website for Trees, Inc. has been formed with all information about the maintenance, inventory, maps and finances for the last five years is available at www.pottstowntrees.org. He also explained the position of Alan Jensen-Sellers, a certified master arborist and Borough resident, who provides evaluations on an individual basis and presents a recommendation to Trees, Inc.

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Mr. Hylton also explained the damage done by tree roots to the older sewer pipes. He added that since the use of PVC piping, there has been no tree damage by tree root invasion to those pipes. Mr. Hylton also advised that through a Penn State grant, an inventory of about 250 trees and sidewalks took place in November 2007.

President Garner commented that it might be beneficial for Council and the Shade Tree Commission to review the present Ordinance and Policy for consideration of updates or revisions. Mr. Garner also agreed that not all sidewalk issues are related to trees.

Councilor Toroney commented that with more complaints being received regarding trees and sidewalks, he felt the need for this meeting in order to direct the Commission in giving advise and recommendations to Council.

Mr. Hylton responded that he took Mr. Toroney's suggestions as constructive criticism and has complied with his requests, which resulted in the formation of the website.

Councilor Rhoads also commented that all should move forward in a positive direction.

President Garner again suggested a review of the previous comments and suggestions submitted by the Shade Tree Commission since any changes are ultimately Council's decision.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Attested

Raymond W. Lopez
Borough Manager