

Town of Odessa
Minutes of the
TREE COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday December 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Old Academy Building
315 Main Street, Odessa, DE 19730
In Person

Call to Order

Chairman Melaine Minear called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission members Michael Callaghan, Neeka Grove, Melaine Minear, Jeff Pyle and Quentin Schlieder were present.

Consideration of Minutes from the November 8, 2022 Meeting

Commissioner Jeff Pyle moved to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2022 meeting. Secretary Quentin Schlieder seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Old Business

Written Master Plan for Care, Preservation, Pruning, Planting, Replacing & Removal

Secretary Schlieder noted that the draft outline of the Master Plan had been distributed to members at the November 8, 2022 Tree Commission meeting and delivered to those who were unable to attend. Comments were requested by December 1, 2022, and except for Commissioner Neeka Grove no comments were received. Commissioner Grove had requested that four dogwoods near the Post Office on Main Street be added for running or removal. Secretary Schlieder, noting the very limited budget, suggested that the inventory be the basis for considering contract work on trees, and that a priority be assigned based on public safety considerations, as noted in the draft Master Plan. It also was noted that the Town was reluctant to expend funds from the budget at this time and wanted to wait to see if they might be needed to address storm damage this winter. After brief discussion, it was decided that these trees could be pruned to facilitate pedestrian traffic by Town volunteers, rather than via a contract arborist, following a consultation with the property owner who planted the trees in the right-of-way.

Members of the Commission noted that they had not received the extensive additions proposed by Secretary Schlieder, nor had they the opportunity to review them. After brief review of these changes, Chairman Minear recommended that approval of the Master Plan be deferred until the January 10, 2023 meeting, especially since the Town Council is not planning to meet in January. Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to table final review and approval of the Master Plan until the January 10, 2023 Tree Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jeff Pyle and was adopted unanimously by voice vote. Commissioner Pyle advised that he will be on vacation in January and will be unable to attend the meeting. Secretary Schlieder noted that it would be helpful if comments and questions be emailed to him by January 3, 2023 so that he can include them in the revised Master Plan document so that they can be shared with the Commission prior to the next meeting.

Approval of the final drafts of brochures/fliers

Chairman Minear announced that in order to proceed with the informational brochures on various topics, they need to be approved by the Tree Commission and then submitted to the Mayor, and at his discretion the Town Council. It was noted that Secretary Schlieder can provide three Lucite brochure racks to be placed at various sites. It was recommended that in addition to Town Hall, that the racks be placed at the Corbit-Calloway Library and the Post Office, if possible.

The first brochure to be considered was the General brochure about the Shade Tree Commission. Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to approve the brochure titled “*Odessa, Delaware – Tree Commission.*” Commissioner Neeka Groves seconded the motion. Chairman Melaine Minear asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, she asked for a vote on the motion and the motion was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

The second brochure to be considered was the titled “*Odessa, Delaware Tree Commission – Frequently asked Questions.*” Commissioner Jeff Pyle moved to approve the brochure titled “*Odessa, Delaware Tree Commission – Frequently Asked Questions.*” Commissioner Neeka Groves seconded the motion. Chairman Melaine Minear asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, she asked for a vote on the motion and the motion was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Chairman Melaine Minear noted that the next item was the consideration of the three posters concerning the Spotted Lantern Fly and its control. Commissioner Neeka Grove moved to approve the three posters concerning the Spotted Lantern Fly and its control at various stages in its lifecycle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jeff Pyle. Chairman Melaine Minear asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, she asked for a vote on the motion and the motion was adopted unanimously by voice vote. It was suggested that in addition to Town Hall, that the racks be placed at the Corbit-Calloway Library and the Post Office, if possible. Commissioner Michael Callaghan suggested a wider distribution of these posters to all residents. Secretary Quentin Schlieder noted that Mayor Smith had offered an email blast which would be the most cost-effective way to achieve this objective.

The third brochure to be considered was the titled “*Town of Odessa Tribute Tree Project.*” Commissioner Neeka Grove noted that the image was not sharp, and Secretary Schlieder advised that the photograph could be swapped out for better image when one become available. Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to approve the brochure titled “*Town of Odessa Tribute Tree Project.*” Commissioner Jeff Pyle seconded the motion. Chairman Melaine Minear asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being none, she asked for a vote on the motion, and the motion was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

New Business

First Draft Tree Request Brochure

Secretary Quentin Schlieder distributed the initial draft of “*Odessa, Delaware Tree Commission – Tree Request Brochure.*” He noted that the diagram for selecting a planting location on the inside of the brochure from the New York City Parks Department needs to be sharpened. He was unsure whether it was an issue with the PDF file or his printer, but he would work on resolving the issues. However, the text should still be reviewed and the consideration on the disposition of the brochure will be included in the agenda for the January 10, 2023 Tree Commission meeting. A brief discussion regarding homeowners planting trees in the public right-of-way ensued. While the ordinance clearly states that a home owner is required to request written approval, Secretary Quentin Schlieder suggested that a kinder and gentler approach would be to refer to it as a consultation with the Commission or its representative.

Tree Species Selection – What to Consider

Secretary Quentin Schlieder distributed an informational sheet from the North Carolina Forest Service titled “Tree Species Selection: What to Consider.” He noted that he found it accidentally while researching another topic. It includes excellent criteria on how to select an appropriate street tree for the existing conditions.

Other New Business

Chairman Melaine Minear briefly discussed a second meeting and subsequent conversations with Keesha Braunskill and Taryn Davidson of the Delaware Forest Service regarding the status of Odessa’s Forest Canopy and the application for Tree City USA designation. She distributed copies of an updated map titled “Odessa Forest Canopy Loss.” But explained that this is not the final version which will be provided when it becomes available. She noted that the Forest Service assisted in opening a portal to the Delaware Forest Service so that the Tree Commission can file documents such as the Tree City USA application and the grant funding. Finally, she requested that the Commissioners consider volunteering to plant or maintain trees.

Next Meeting Date and Time

Chairman Minear reminded the Commission that the next meeting of the Odessa Tree Commission will be held on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Melaine Minear adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m. on the motion of Commissioner Michael Callaghan which was duly seconded by Commissioner Neeka Grove and adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

Quentin C. Schlieder Jr.
Secretary