

**Town of Odessa**  
*Minutes of the*  
**TREE COMMISSION MEETING**

*Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.*  
*Old Academy Building*  
*315 Main Street, Odessa, DE 19730*  
*In Person*

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Commission members Michael Callaghan, Melaine Minear, Jeff Pyle and Quentin Schlieder were present. A quorum was present.

**Consideration of Minutes from the January 10, 2023 Meeting**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear inquired if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of February 14, 2023. Commissioner Callaghan noted that his name had been misspelled. Chairwoman Minear entertained a motion to approve these Minutes as corrected. Commissioner Michael Callaghan moved to approve the Minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting as corrected. Commissioner Jeff Pyle seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote.

**Recognition of Visitors**

No visitors attended the meeting.

**Old Business**

**Arbor Day Celebration**

Since there is an 11:00 a.m. service at Saint Paul's Church, Secretary Quentin Schlieder recommended that the time for the 2023 Arbor Day Celebration be rescheduled for 3:00 p.m. on Sunday April 30, 2023 in front of the State Police Barracks on East Main Street. He distributed proposed copies of an invitation which would be mailed to public officials and invited guests to encourage attendance.

He advised that the White Oak tree which will be planted to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Odessa's Town Charter for the State of Delaware has been received. The plaque commemorating the event has been received and was circulated at the meeting.

He also reported that he is expecting receipt of 50 Sweet Bay Magnolia seedlings before the end of March. He will have these planted in containers for distribution to the public at the event.

Secretary Schlieder advised that he discussed refreshments with Commissioner Jeff Pyle who will check to determine if the Odessa's Woman's Club wished to be involved as they had in the past. If they do not plan to provide the refreshments, Secretary Quentin Schlieder will provide them.

He also consulted Commissioner Pyle about inviting Pastor Ray from Saint Paul's United Methodist Church to offer a prayer at the ceremony. Although Commissioner Pyle noted that he did not personally know Pastor Ray, he would extend the invitation on the Tree Commission's behalf.

Secretary Schlieder advised that he is printing copies of the brochures which will be available at the ceremony. He also will print copies of a program for the event. These will be presented for review and comment at the Tree Commission's April 11, 2023 meeting.

Commissioner Jeff Pyle offered to provide and set up a pop-up tent and table for the event. His offer was gratefully accepted.

**Bids for the Safety Pruning at Municipal Park**

While Chairwoman Melaine Minear reported that she did not locate corner monument for Memorial Park and Odessa Ventures, it appears from maps that the trees are on Town owned land comprising Odessa Memorial Park.

She advised that Secretary Schlieder and she met with representatives of the following arborists to review the scope of work, to provide them with proposal forms and to request their bids for the specified removal of three hazardous trees which were overhanging the paved trail.

**Tree Inc** Facebook (90 – 4.9 stars)  
1014 Marl Pit Road, Middletown, DE  
(302) 757-3303 [treeinllc.com](http://treeinllc.com)  
Bid: Tree No. 1 - \$ 600.00  
Tree No. 2 - \$ 500.00  
Tree No. 3 - \$ 800.00  
All trees - \$1,900.00

**Fish Lawn and Tree, LLC** Facebook (15-5 stars)  
Main St, Townsend  
(302) 383-4202 [Office@FishLawnandTree.com](mailto:Office@FishLawnandTree.com)  
ISA Certified (*Verified*) /BBB A+ [fishlawnandtree.com](http://fishlawnandtree.com)  
Bid: Tree No. 1 - \$ 875.00  
Tree No. 2 - \$ 350.00  
Tree No. 3 - \$ 1,250.00  
All trees - \$2,300.00

**Strobert Tree Services** Facebook (74- 4.2 stars)  
1806 Zebley Rd Wilmington, DE 19810  
Phone: (302) 656-6077  
ISA-Certified (*Verified*) [stroberttree.com](http://stroberttree.com)  
Bid: Tree No. 1 - \$ 2,300.00  
Tree No. 2 - \$ 2,000.00  
Tree No. 3 - \$ 1,800.00  
All trees - \$6,100.00

After brief discussion, Chairwoman Melaine Minear asked for a motion to award the bid and the Commission voted unanimously to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council to award the project at their April 3, 2023 meeting to Tree, Inc., the lowest bid received on the motion of Commissioner Jeff Pyle which was duly seconded by Commissioner Michael Callaghan.

Secretary Schlieder also noted that he discussed a possible tree planting project in the Autumn of 2023 with the representatives of Fish Lawn and Tree Company which has a landscape division, and they expressed interest on bidding on the project.

### **February 23, 2023 Meeting with Taryn Davidson/Tree City USA Application Status**

Chairwoman Melaine Minear and Secretary Quentin Schlieder met with Taryn Davidson of the Delaware Forest Service at the Odessa Diner at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday February 23, 2023. They presented her with 2022 Annual Report Packet to acquaint her with the recent activities of the Odessa Tree Commission.

In response to Chairwoman Minear's inquiry into the status of Odessa's Tree City USA Application, Ms. Davidson advised that the State Forest Service had signed off on the application which had been forwarded to the Arbor Day Foundation for review and consideration. She advised that usually the results are announced in May.

Secretary Schlieder noted that during his tenure with the Smyrna Shade Tree Commission, the Delaware Forest Service had provided a complimentary tree each Spring. He inquired if Odessa would be receiving a tree from the Forest Service this year. Ms. Davidson advised that these trees had been provided by Delmarva Power and were distributed to Tree City USA designees. Since Odessa's application has not been approved, a tree will not be available to the Odessa Tree Commission this spring.

The 2024 Grant Cycle was discussed at length. After reviewing the expected parameters and details, a major planting on East Main Street to fill the gaps in the streetscape was recommended. Ms. Davidson confirmed that other successful applicants had projects with an Autumn planting schedule. She agreed to allow representatives of the Odessa Tree Commission to review successful past applications, which would be valuable in preparing Odessa's application. She advised that tree maintenance is unlikely to be included next year, and as with this year, projects will include planting and inventories.

Secretary Schlieder suggested that a meeting be planned to review the project with property owners to assure that there is community support for the initiative. He suggested that such a forum be scheduled in September.

Based on an anticipated early March deadline for applications in the 2024 grant cycle, an application should be completed and submitted to the Odessa Mayor and Council no later than its December 4, 2023 meeting, since the Council does not generally meet in January. Ms. Davidson noted that two bids are currently required, and she did not anticipate any change in that requirement.

Ms. Davidson advised that only volunteer work after October 1, 2023 can be used to match the cost of the project. Therefore, an emphasis should be made to accrue volunteer hours in late Autumn. "Make a Difference Day" is celebrated annually on the fourth Saturday of October, on October 28 this year, and a project for this event could help accrue the volunteer equity needed to match the Town's share of the grant.

### **Dogwoods on Main Street Near Post Office**

The Commission is still awaiting a response from the property owner. Carol Sheats has advised Chairwoman Minear that she is removing her involvement as the go between the Commission and the property owner. The Ordinance states that if corrective action is not taken, the matter is referred to the Council who may send a letter asking the property owner to comply with the ordinance. It was noted that it appears that some of the branches interfering with pedestrian traffic have been removed and there is a sign which prohibits parking on the street in the proximity of the trees. Commissioner Michael Callaghan noted that the Commission has more important matters to address at this time and suggested that the matter be deferred.

### **Facebook Page**

Secretary Schlieder reported that he has commenced preliminary investigation to initiate the Facebook page which will be titled "Odessa Delaware's Tree Log." He anticipates it will be an open group and a great platform to promote the work of the Commission. He hopes to have more to report at the April 11, 2023 Odessa Tree Commission meeting.

### **Halfway to Arbor Day Party**

Secretary Schlieder noted that the Commission must raise funds to implement its masterplan, including the planting and maintenance of trees. This event is one of the easiest ways to accomplish that goal.

Secretary Schlieder contacted Commissioner Pyle to request a meeting with his wife Carla Pyle to strategize on how to best proceed since she has had vast experience with the Woman's Club, Christmas in Odessa and other successful Town events. It is hoped that she can assist in identifying a venue, Committee Chair, list of invitees and other issues which must be addressed to sponsor a successful event.

It is hoped that a "Save The Date" card will be available for the April 30, 2023 Arbor Day event. The event is tentatively set for Sunday, October 7, 2023 from 3:00 -5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Pyle asked Secretary Schlieder to contact his wife to arrange the requested meeting since she is agreeable to assisting with the planning. He also mentioned that the former Bank which is owned by the Historic Odessa Foundation might be available for the event. Secretary Schlieder advised that he intended this to be a garden party at a private home. Commissioner Pyle noted that perhaps his side yard might be a possible venue.

### **Inventory and Mapping – Michael Callahan**

Secretary Schlieder reported that he plans to initiate the inventory using the previously approved cards in early May after Arbor Day and when the trees are in full leaf for the photographs which will be entered on the cards. East Main Street will be the first priority, since the data collected will be useful in preparing the proposed 2024 Delaware Forestry Grant application, and since it would conform to the Tree Commission's adopted 2022-2024 Master Plan.

Chairwoman Melaine Minear advised that the UPS Store in Middletown, DE has a large bed printer capable of printing large format documents at a very reasonable price from approximately \$3.50 to \$8.00 per page. This might be useful in the mapping/inventory initiative.

Commissioner Michael Callaghan followed up on his previous presentation on mapping, again noting there are several possible approaches to online mapping including through the US Forest Service, USGS and NOAA. ARC/GIS mapping will cost about \$65.00 per year, but other platforms are available at no cost, including Google Earth. He also noted that Google Earth seems to be very user-friendly. Chairwoman Minear inquired if he had a preference of the various platforms. He noted that he needs to do additional investigation and hopes to have a recommendation, possibly as early as the April meeting.

### **Amending Ordinance No. 2002-1 to incorporate some of the requirements of New Castle County UDC – Chapter 40, Article 23**

Chairwoman Minear noted that copies of the proposed amendments to The Town of Odessa's Ordinance No. 2002-1 were emailed to each Commissioner by Secretary Schlieder on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. She asked if there were any comments on these proposed amendments,

Secretary Schlieder advised that he had received an email from Odessa Town Secretary Amy Marie Ottinger noting the proposed amendment of the ordinance needs to remove the additional verbiage about the Town Charter stating the Commission needs to consist of five members – "to include one from

planning and one from historic.” She added that she had since discovered Ordinance 2005-3 to Amend Ordinance 2002-1 which states “There is hereby created and established a Town Tree Commission which shall consist of five (5) members, who shall be appointed by the Mayor with the approval of Council. The members shall consist of a certified tree professional and four (4) property owners in the Town.”

It was suggested that since there appears to be several ordinances guiding the operations of the Tree Commission, these should be rescinded and a new amended ordinance should be adopted. Chairwoman Minear inquired if any Commissioners had any corrections or additions they would like to have included in the proposed amended ordinance. She noted there were several grammatical corrections she would add which will not materially change the ordinance, i.e., addition of the word “the”, etc.

There being no additions or material changes to the proposed amended ordinance, Commissioner Jeff Pyle moved to adopt the amended ordinance as discussed, this evening. Commissioner Michael Callaghan seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously by voice vote. Secretary Schlieder will contact Town Secretary Amy Marie Ottinger to request that the amended ordinance be considered for its first reading at the next Odessa Town Council meeting on April 3, 2023. A copy of the proposed amended ordinance is appended to, and made part of these minutes.

#### **Recruitment of Volunteers/Scout and Odessa High School Outreach**

Since Ms. Davidson of the Delaware Forest Service has advised that only hours accrued after October 1, 2023 can be used as a match for the proposed 2024 grant application, recruitment of volunteers will be deferred until September.

#### **Earth Day Event – Removal of English Ivy at Odessa Memorial Park on Saturday, April 22, 2023 – 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

Chairwoman Minear noted that since she has a scheduling conflict, and since volunteer hours could not be used for the grant match, she suggested deferring the event until October 28, 2023 in celebration of “Make a Difference Day,” Commissioner Callaghan encouraged the Chairwoman to contact the scout groups before the summer so that they are not committed to other projects. The Commission concurred.

#### **New Business**

##### **English Ivy Advisory**

Secretary Schlieder distributed copies of the proposed English ivy Advisory notice. The Commission agreed these should be posted to make the public aware of the problem.

##### **Pruning Workshop**

Secretary Schlieder suggested that the pruning workshop be scheduled in early June on a weekday evening when days are longer and weather is more pleasant, since some of the workshop should be an outdoor demonstration. Commissioner Callaghan suggested that a Monday or Tuesday evening would probably be best, although the workshop needs to be scheduled so that it won’t conflict with a Council or Commission meeting. After brief discussion, the workshop was set for Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

##### **Other New Business**

No other new business was raised at the meeting.

##### **Next Meeting Date and Time**

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

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairwoman Melaine Minear adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m. on the motion of Commissioner Michael Callaghan which was duly seconded by Commissioner Jeff Pyle and adopted unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

Quentin C. Schlieder Jr.  
Secretary

*Attachment begins on next page.*