HAWTHORNE
Shade Tree Commission

BOROUGH OF HAWTHORNE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
445 LAFAYETTE AVENUE, HAWTHORNE, NEW JERSEY 07506
PHONE: 427-5555 EXT. 318

April 18, 2008 Meeting Notes

Attendance:, , Declan Madden (DM), Pieter Slump (PSL), John Terry (JT), & Philip Savoie (PS)
Absent: Rick Hockenberry (RH), Patrick Allen (PA)-Borough Arborist, Joe Wojtecki (JW)- Council Liaison 07:30PM-09:30PM

Motion to open meeting: PS-1st, DM-2nd, unanimous vote to approve.

This was an additional official meeting to discuss the issue of two trees located at 34 Sylvester Ave. and their potential impacts on the surrounding property and roadway. The meeting was held to prepare for this matter in regard to a request from Administration to discuss this specific location on April 21, 2008. The Commission met to discuss the pro's and con's of the trees at this location, the review of Mr. Ted Szczawinski's (State of NJ Certified Tree Expert) professional review of these two trees, possible root pruning, the trees general health and Commission policy in regard to infrastructure/tree conflicts.

In general, the Commission weighed past policy and present policy for consistency in regard to infrastructure/tree conflicts. In other cases where enforcement action was taken against a property owner for violating the Borough ordinance and then fined, this decision could reverse previous actions by this current Commission and previous Commissions and lead to more residents destroying Borough property (the trees) when replacing infrastructure. This would have the unintended consequence of actually costing the Borough more money to remove damaged or unsafe trees, as well as the loss of trees in the Borough in general.

The Commission considered the general health of these large, mature trees to be good, as was also noted by Mr. Szczawinski. These trees were also judged to be the healthiest tree on this block by Mr. Szczawinski.

The Commission considered the implications of root pruning for these large trees and potential premature structural failure of these trees if the roots were disturbed. Root pruning was determined to not be a viable choice in this circumstance due to the size of the trees and roots. As noted previously, the trees general stability could actually be made worse by root pruning in this case. The area was noted to have many potential targets if the trees were to fail or fall down.

The matter of the roots in the roadway by one of the trees was also discussed. As of this time, the roots that are breaking through the adjacent roadway do not appear to be compromising the one tree's health. While this is not a desirable situation for the tree's general health, navigation of the roadway is not hindered and plowing activities do not appear to have been stopped. If and when the roadway is rebuilt or repaved, this matter can be reviewed.

The issue of following the current ordinance requirements was discussed, in which the resident had written to a Councilman regarding this subject and location, but not the Commission, in 2006. The Commission had previously reached out through correspondence in 2006 to the resident regarding this matter. Additionally, the resident did not follow the ordinance in that neighbors in a radius of up to 200 feet from the property and trees in question were not notified of the request for removal and no proof provided that the notification was made to neighboring residents. Finally, if these healthy trees are removed without approval by the Commission as per the ordinance, a replacement cost value assessment would have to be charged to the property owner as a matter of consistency with the ordinance.

The Commission also considered the cost of removing these two trees. At current rates charged by a local contractor last year to remove a similar sized tree with a crane cost the Commission and Borough $3500.00. Removing these two trees would cost the Commission and Borough approximately $7000.00. It would be cheaper to replace the sidewalk with an extend path using round outs than to remove these healthy trees.

The issue of using sidewalk round outs as a mitigation strategy for the roots was felt to be the best method to repair the sidewalks and protect these trees. It was noted by the Commission that multiple precedents of using this strategy to protect trees and allow sidewalks to be repaired are present throughout the Borough. Additionally that the Commission has on many

occasions voted to approve tree removals where the health of the tree was not good and a sidewalk or other infrastructure needed to be repaired.

After discussing these factors and deliberating about this matter, the Commission made two motions to memorialize the Commission's position on this matter.

1st Motion. A motion was made to consider and approve the Administration's potential request to remove a tree or trees at 34 Sylvester Ave. 1st-PS, 2nd-No second of this motion. The motion dies, no further action.

2nd Motion. A motion was made to express the Commission's support to save both trees located at 34 Sylvester Ave. as they are, without change. 1st-PS, 2nd-DM Vote to approve: PS, DM & PSL. Vote to abstain: JT. No votes against motion. Motion approved.

This ended this meeting. Motion to close meeting: 1st-PS, 2nd-JT Unanimous vote to close meeting.