ENVIRONMENTAL & SHADE TREE COMMISSION 09/08/2021 – Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: R. Ambrosio, P. Bagdanov, J. Halifko, W. Heyniger, D. Allen, M. Celli

ABSENT: N. Holzer, G. Sharin, J. Stocum

OLD BUSINESS:

Motion to approve August 11 minutes offered by J. Halifko, seconded by W. Heyniger and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

RAIN GARDEN - 101 S. Riverside Drive:

W. Heyniger stated he is awaiting plant list/quote from LP Statile.

D. Allen suggested planting of deer-resistant plants; Heyniger stated he has been prioritizing the inclusion of native plants, but will work to include more deer-resistant plants.

W. Heyniger requested update on this project from Engineering Department.

UPDATE – P. Valentine (DSEC, Engineering) 090921: There have been no new developments in this project since Leanne Hoffmann's resignation.

DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION:

SUNSHINE VILLAGE PARK & FIELDS, October 16th planting:

Question was raised as to who would dig holes for new trees; W. Heyniger stated that the group will mark locations and holes will be dug by G. Sharin.

HECK AVENUE ARBORETUM and potential curb cut:

- W. Heyniger related plans to clear weeds, plant wildflowers, and utilize Arbor Day plants.
- W. Heyniger suggested SW corner of lot at corner of Heck and Doremus as possible location for a rain garden.
- R. Ambrosio will contact David Milmoe (Director, DPW) about the feasibility of a rain garden at this site.
- D. Allen requested a copy of the tax map for the location of the Arboretum (Block 909 / Lot 1)

Discussion was had about installation of/access to a water spigot in the vicinity of the Arboretum, to facilitate watering of plantings.

PLANT IRRIGATION RINGS:

P. Bagdanov suggested tree rings/tree bags as a possible aid in watering new plantings at the Arboretum. COMMENT – P. Valentine 090921: Because of the Arboretum's proximity to schools, and knowing that young people do spend time in the arboretum, I would recommend the sturdier plastic ring style over the easily-punctured bag style.

TRAINING & CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS:

Regarding CEUs, P. Bagdanov asked if C. Bedrosian can count as an employee. **Further discussion is needed.**

RAIN GARDEN - 25 NEPTUNE BLVD:

It was mentioned that at one point – when the flower beds were redone at 25 Neptune – a rain garden was also proposed for the lawn in front of the Municipal Complex; an update was requested.

INVASIVE SPECIES / NJ "Do Not Plant" List:

In discussing the Planning Board application under review, D. Allen referenced the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (NJISST) 2021 Do Not Plant List. She will forward a link to that listing to C. Bedrosian so that it can be referred to in future work.

UPDATE - P. Valentine 090921: List has been downloaded and copies made for members.

PLANS/APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW:

ZB #21/09 - GSZ Realty LLC Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan (Block 808 / Lots 5-8):

§509H: The applicant is not proposing any foundation plantings and must seek a waiver of this requirement.

The Commission does not support a waiver of this requirement.

• §509I: The applicant is not proposing any landscaping areas within the parking lot and must seek a waiver of this requirement.

The Commission does not support a waiver of this requirement.

• §509I.3: The applicant is not proposing any landscaping islands/trees within the parking lot and must seek a waiver of this requirement.

The Commission does not support a waiver of this requirement.

• §509I.3(b): The applicant is not proposing any landscaping islands within rows of more than eight (8) parking spaces and must seek a waiver of this requirement.

The Commission does not support a waiver of this requirement.

Impervious coverage: The applicant is proposing 80% impervious coverage.

Although the proposed 80% meets ordinance requirements, the Commission is opposed to this amount of impervious coverage at this site.

- Proposed plantings:
 - The applicant lists 16 (sixteen) Miscanthus sinensis ("Chinese silver grass") as part of the landscaping proposal.

Miscanthus sinensis is listed on the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (NJISST) "2021 Do Not Plant List", and should not be introduced to this locale.

The Commission suggests the following plants as alternatives to *Miscanthus:*

Andropogon gerardii ("big bluestem")

Schizachryium scoparium ("little bluestem")

Sorghastrum nutans ("indiangrass")

 The applicant lists 3 (three) Ginkgo biloba ("maidenhair") trees as part of the landscaping proposal. The Commission asks for confirmation that all Gingko trees planted will be male. The female of this species produces seeds containing butyric (aka butanoic) acid, which omits a strong, rancid odor when fallen.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn offered by W. Heyniger, seconded by J. Halifko and unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Submitted by Pamela Valentine, 09/10/21.