**City of Cape May**
**Shade Tree Commission**
**Auditorium/Live Stream Meeting Minutes of**
**Wednesday, October 14, 2026**
**5:00 pm**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ator called the meeting to order and announced compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Ator led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ATTENDANCE**

Chairman Ator, Commissioner Sick, Commissioner Drake, Commissioner Novino, Commissioner Robinson.

**ABSENT MEMBERS**

Vice Chairman Werner, Commissioner York

**GUESTS**

Joseph Hillegas, 25 Gurney Street

Mr. Hillegas came to ask permission to remove a mimosa tree on his property at 25 Gurney Street. It is on the corner of Kearny and Gurney, against the house. Chairman Ator stated that it is an invasive species and he would be okay with it being taken down. City Arborist, Matt Notch, stated that trees that have been planted in that area over the years have not had very good success.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 25 Gurney Street.

Commissioner Sick– Abstain
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

Phil Greene, 814 Kearney Avenue

Mr. Greene appeared in front of the Commission to ask permission to remove a black locust tree at 814 Kearney Avenue. Commissioner Drake stated that she observed the trunk and the roots of the tree were coming right along the foundation of the house.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 814 Kearney Avenue.

Commissioner Sick – Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve the minutes of August 12, 2026.

Commissioner Sick– Abstain
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**Street Tree Removal Requests**

**641 Hughes Street – Commissioner Novino**

Commissioner Novino stated that she looked at this tree and it was dead. It is a Norway maple tree.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to approve the removal of the tree at 641 Hughes Street.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes

Chairman Ator – Yes

**1122 Delaware Avenue – Commissioner York**

Commissioner York sent an email regarding this pear tree at 1122 Delaware Avenue and stated that it was dead.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Novino to approve the removal of the tree at 1122 Delaware Avenue.

Commissioner Sick– Abstain
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**Cape May Median, Across from 1036 Cape May Avenue – Vice Chairman Werner**

Vice Chairman Werner wrote in his email that this is a dead locust tree and has been dead for at least a year.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to approve the removal of the tree across from 1036 Cape May Avenue.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1441C Pennsylvania Avenue – Commissioner York**

Commissioner York sent an email that this tree is completely dead and there was nothing left at all.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 1441C Pennsylvania Avenue

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes

Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1313 Cape May Avenue – Commissioner York**

Chairman Ator stated that this was a silver maple tree that is in decline and is not worth saving.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 1313 Cape May Avenue.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1331B Illinois Avenue – Commissioner York**

Vice Chairman Ator stated that there was not much of the tree still alive.

Commissioner Sick motioned, seconded by Commissioner Novino to approve the removal of the tree at 1331B Illinois Avenue

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**329 Congress Street – Chairman Ator**

Chairman Ator stated that this tree is a bradford pear that is partially in decline. He recommended that another larger tree be planted in its place. Discussion was had regarding this and being that all Commissioners did not look at it, it was recommended that it be tabled.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to table the vote until November

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**Residential Tree Removal Requests**

**227 Perry Street – Chairman Ator**

Chairman Ator stated that there is a large construction project taking place at this property. There are four large cedar trees that are being proposed to be removed. Two of these trees are in the footprint of the renovation. He recommended planting eastern red cedar trees where the cedar is in the front. The homeowner will need to plant eight replacement trees or contribute to the Tree Bank.

Commissioner Robinson motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal the four cedar trees at 227 Perry Street and recommend that the homeowner replaces them with the eastern red cedars with the two for one replacement or make a contribution to the Tree Bank

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**909 Corgie Street – Commissioner Drake**

Commissioner Drake stated that she went to look at these trees. There is a hackberry and ornamental plum tree that are embedded in a fence line. There is also a white birch tree that is leaning against a fence.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve the removal of the hackberry, ornamental plum, and the large white birch with a two for one replacement on the birch only.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1222 Delaware Avenue – Commissioner York**

Chairman Ator stated that he looked at this tree and it is in bad shape. The trunk is split and it's mostly dead.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to approve the removal of the tree at 1222 Delaware Avenue and not require it to be replaced because of the condition

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**710 Corgie Street – Commissioner Novino**

Commissioner Novino stated that this tree is completely dead and should be removed.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to remove the tree at 710 Corgie Street

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1261C Missouri Avenue – Commissionner York**

Chairman Ator stated that this was storm damage from the winter and it is not worth saving.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 1261C Missouri Avenue with the fees and replacement trees waived

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1420 Pennsylvania Avenue – Commissionner York**

Commissioner York stated in her notes that there is one dead tree and two trees that are compromised by vines. She recommends approving and no replacement for the dead tree.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the three trees at 1420 Pennsylvania Avenue with the replacement only for the two trees required or donation to the tree bank

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1210B Vermont Avenue – Commissioner York**

Commissioner York stated in her notes that this is a pear tree that is close to the house and is in decline. She recommended removal of the tree.

Commissioner Sick motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to approve the removal of the tree at 1210B Vermont Avenue with the fee and a one for one replacement or donation to the Tree Bank.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1352 Delaware Avenue – Commissioner York**

Commissioner York stated in her notes that there were three multi-trunk pine trees with one damaged in the storm. The damaged tree was denied and approved on appeal. This application is for the two additional trees.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve the removal of the two pine trees with the fee and two for one replacement or donation to the Tree Bank required

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1034 New York Avenue – Vice Chairman Werner**

Vice Chairman Werner stated in his notes that this was a bradford pear that is interfering with wires.

Commissioner Sick motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to approve the removal of the tree with the two for one replacement or a $1,200.00 contribution to the Tree Bank

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1004 Idaho Avenue – Vice Chairman Werner**

Chairman Ator stated that this is a poplar tree that was broken with the storm damage.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to approve the removal of the tree at 1004 Idaho Avenue with no replacement due to storm damage

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes

Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**259 Grant Street – Chairman Ator**

Chairman Ator stated that this is a holly tree that has two large trunks that come off it. The one trunk is solid and the other is solid. The homeowner would like to remove it due to proximity to the house. He recommended that the city arborist look at the tree to assess.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Drake to table the vote until November pending an assessment by the city arborist.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**300 Madison Avenue – Commissioner Drake**

Commissioner Drake stated that she went to look at the trees and they were damaged in one of the storms in the winter. The top half of the trees are gone.

Commissioner Drake motioned, seconded by Commissioner Robinson to approve the removal of the trees at 300 Madison Avenue with the fees and replacement requirement waived due to storm damage.

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**1134 Washington Street – Commissioner Goldstein**

Commissioner Goldstein was not present, and Chairman Ator did not look at the tree. It was recommended to table this.

Commissioner Novino motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sick to table the vote until November

Commissioner Sick– Yes
Commissioner Drake – Yes
Commissioner Novino – Yes
Commissioner Robinson - Yes
Chairman Ator – Yes

**New Business**

Chairman Ator stated that 710 Sewell still owes $3,000.00 to the Tree Bank. The homeowner at 722 Corgie still needs to plant a street tree. It was discussed that compliance needs to be tracked better.

Chairman Ator asked for all Commissioners to look at a street tree at 285 Windsor Avenue. He stated that it is not healthy and believes it should be removed.

The Shade Tree Federation Conference is on October 22nd.

Changes to the application were discussed and the new application will be available soon.

Commissioner Novino motioned, Commissioner Sick seconded to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Emerick
Cape May City
Shade Tree Commission Secretary