

Meeting of Interlaken Shade Tree Commission

Meeting held – September 9th, 2025– Borough Hall

Welcome to All. NJ Sunshine Law was read to all participants prior to beginning of ISTC Meeting.

Attendees per roll call: Marguerite Dalton, John Finn, Laura Fikus, Chuck Santoro and John Insabella

Others in attendance was Bill Brash, Independent Forester and Tim Thomas from the Freehold Soil Conservation District

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM

Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the August 2025 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Reforestation Grant

- Fall Planting: Scheduled for November 19, 2025.

- Survival Rate: Of the 88 trees planted last year, only three did not survive — an excellent success rate.

- Replacements: 10 trees have been ordered, 3 are replacement grant trees, 7 are replacement trees for the ones that were removed in front of resident's houses.

- A weeping willow for the arboretum.
- A replacement tree for 611 Bridlemere Avenue.

- Fertilization: Bartlett Tree Experts will complete fertilization treatments, fulfilling the grant requirements.

Respectfully submitted by Chuck Santoro, Asst. ISTC Secretary

Beech Leaf Disease

- Treatments are available, lasting three years, but costs remain high.
- Only trees with a minimum 10-inch diameter are eligible for treatment.
- Both Aspen and Bartlett can apply treatments.

Tree Replacement Review

- The Commission is actively reviewing properties where homeowners have removed trees to confirm that replacement requirements are being met.

Deer Damage

- Deer rutting continues to cause significant damage to newly planted trees.
- Tree guards have been reinforced; however, concerns remain that additional losses may occur, as happened with the willow tree.
- Resident Engagement:
 - Residents should be reminded not to feed deer, particularly near Borough Hall.

Tree Request Form

- Updated Honor Me Tree Form (revised from July meeting) was presented by Chuck Santoro. The Commission approved the new version. Santoro to send to Lori to upload on the website. We have three residents who want to plant a tree, and we want to have it happen during the fall planting ideally

Community Forestry Program — Expert Briefings (Brash & Thomas)

- State Application & Inventory Focus (Brash):
 - The state requires an up-to-date tree inventory and clearly defined five-year goals.
 - Collaboration with a licensed forester is expected.
 - Our inventory must be updated to include the 88 new trees.
 - i-Tree software will be used to analyze canopy cover.
 - Brash will connect the Commission with the JCP&L Forester and return on October 14, 2025, to review findings and help structure next steps.
 - Emphasis placed on data-driven decision-making.
- Freehold Soil Conservation District Overview (Thomas):
 - The District has been established since the 1930s and covers Monmouth and Middlesex counties.
 - Staff includes 16 employees.
 - Plans are underway to launch an intern program to support tree inventory management.
 - Jacob Black, currently mentored by Brash, will assume responsibilities when Brash Respectfully submitted by Chuck Santoro, Asst. ISTC Secretary

retires next year.

- Resourcing & Grants:

- Thomas's team has greater resources than in the past and will be a key partner in navigating complex grant processes.

- Role Clarity:

- A forester manages the urban forest as a system.
- An arborist focuses on the health and care of individual trees.

 **Public Comment**

- No public comments were made.

 **Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.