

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2024, 6:30PM, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room, 3 Weller Place

1. Roll Call

- a.** Present: Shannon Wisniewski, Patrick Romano, Sandi Bush, David Demopoulos, Andrew Melhem, Lee Hilbert and Paige Strasko.

- b.** The meeting was called to order at 6:34PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 3, 2024

- a.** Wisniewski briefly discussed the disconnected way that the minutes of the October 3 meeting read and asked STC members if they would agree to reorganize the content, so it reads better for residents. Members agreed.
- b.** Wisniewski made a motion to approve the minutes following content reorganization, and Bush seconded. The motion passed by voice vote with Melhem abstaining.

3. Old Business

a. Newsletters/Community Outreach

- i.** Wisniewski and Bush briefly discussed the layout and graphics in a draft newsletter article for February that was shared with STC members. Wisniewski explained the educational goals and concepts of previous and current newsletter articles to Melhem as a new member.

4. New Business

a. New Member Introduction- Andrew Melhem

- i.** Wisniewski asked Melhem to introduce himself, explain what his interests were, what his goals were, and how he found out about the opening for the STC. Melhem shared that he grew up in Old Orchard and still lives there, Charles Bellis was his football coach in his youth, he heard about the opening from Bellis and is looking to help in any way he can with his minimal knowledge of trees.

b. Reorganization

- i.** Bush made a motion to appoint Wisniewski as Chairman, and Romano seconded. The motion passed by voice vote and Wisniewski was appointed Chairman.
- ii.** Wisniewski made a motion to appoint Romano as Vice Chairman. After a brief discussion, Bush seconded. The motion passed by voice vote and Romano was appointed Vice Chairman.

c. STC Budget

- i.** Wisniewski briefly discussed overall goals for the budget items in 2025, conversations with Kistler regarding where funds are allocated, new street tree planting, and educational events for 2025. Wisniewski stated that her

philosophy is to use it or lose it, and STC members asked clarifying questions about future and current tree planting.

i. Open Street Identification

- a.** Wisniewski and Romano discussed focusing efforts on identifying open spaces where new street trees could be planted. STC members discussed the level of resident involvement, clarified that they are only identifying open spaces right now, that they should be prioritizing streets that have a less dense tree canopy, and that it is a multifaceted process.
- b.** Demopoulos described and displayed photos from the GIS map layer he created during his investigation of open streets that may be suitable for new street tree plantings. Demopoulos also described the priority ranking system he developed and areas where he saw a need for street trees including new construction.
- c.** STC members discussed checking landscape plans for new construction projects to understand what trees will be planted at the completion of projects Demopoulos identified, keeping road classifications in mind so the group does not waste time looking at state or county roads, asked clarifying questions about priority one designations, if the properties identified could be classified on the map, what report output capabilities are, and having something tangible for the group to look at and make notes on. Wisniewski stated that she would send the Township Road Classification map to Demopoulos for his use while identifying open spaces for street trees.

d. Arbor Day 2025

- i.** Wisniewski discussed Arbor Day planning with the group and asked Melhem how he was with party planning, described the last two annual Arbor Day events, that the group would like to have a theme this year, partnering with the library again for programming, having two food trucks and a raffle to draw people to the event.
- ii.** Melhem clarified and summarized that he would be contacting food trucks for quotes and would be working on a theme and general outline of activities for children and adults.
- iii.** STC members discussed food options for the event, including vegetarian options, using the same food truck as last year with another truck for other options, contacting businesses again for tree donations, using the same resources as last year for donations, and how many trees to plant this year during the event.

- iv. Strasko stated that she would share the contact information for the tree donations received last year, as well as the food truck. STC members also discussed memorial trees, and planting locations around the Municipal Building.

e. Follow-Up Actions

- i. Wisniewski discussed continuing to have STC representatives at other board meetings such as the Planning Commission and Recreation Board to align goals and have open communication between various volunteer boards.
- ii. STC members also discussed asking the Board of Supervisors (BoS) questions about next steps and goals, questions about specific trees on Van Buren Road, timing of posting the BoS agendas, and the suggestion that all members rotate attendance for pertinent meetings.
- iii. Wisniewski made a motion to have members present at the BoS meetings, and other Township meetings, and Romano seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

f. Plan Review

- i. Wisniewski briefly discussed if members preferred paper copies of plans, or if they were able to view plans electronically. A few members can view them digitally, and Wisniewski stated that for those who wanted paper copies, they can coordinate plan pick up the week prior to the meeting in case of multiple plan submissions. Wisniewski asked that Strasko send a reminder to pick up physical copies with the agenda each month.

i. 2260 Corriere Road

- a. STC members discussed the plans submitted for the project on Corriere Road, that it was an addition to an existing property and the group was unsure of the requirements for additions to existing property.
- b. The group made a consensus to comment that there was no landscape plans provided, and proposed the applicant provide a full landscaping plan with species listed and that they needed more detail.

ii. 1280 Main Street

- a. STC members had a brief discussion regarding where Rutters are mainly located in the state and discussed the Township open space adjacent to the site location for the plans submitted.
- b. STC members made a consensus to comment that there should be height appropriate street trees every 50 feet along the front of the property, to expand landscaping around the Rutter's sign, amending the planting plan to state that burlap should be

completely removed, that there was a discrepancy between the drawing and the table on the landscaping plan for the amount of honey locusts to be planted on site, suggested planting a buffer between the building and the Township open space, and suggested using taller tree species in the parking lot.

iii. 3106 William Penn Highway

- a. STC members discussed the plans, the site, and restrictions due to the busy state road the site is on and surrounding residential and commercial properties.
- b. STC members made a consensus to comment that the applicant should change Cornus mass to Cornus controversa, that there is a discrepancy between the drawing and planting table for the number of red maples to be planted, that the applicant should alternate species in the tree row, add another species such as black tulip for diversity, asked if there is a specific reason why there is no planting around the rear of the building, and that the applicant should consider adding more trees around the site.

iv. 2620 Kingston Road

- a. STC members briefly discussed the site and previous comments made on the first plan review.
- b. STC members made a consensus to comment that the applicant should alternate or diversify species in the tree row using species such as tulip poplar, little leaf linden, or hornbeam, that the applicant needs to replace the red oak with another species, that there is lack of a buffer between the project site and the adjacent learning center, that the planting plan must state to remove all burlap, and to add trees and vegetation in the swales on the property.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. Strasko stated that she had no updates from the BoS but updated the group on the progress of the park and street tree planting.

b. Tree City USA/Grant trees available

i. Tree Pennsylvania

1. Strasko and Hilbert updated the group that they picked up the bare root trees earlier that afternoon, and Hilbert asked clarifying questions regarding where certain tree species should be planted. Wisniewski clarified and discussed, and STC members discussed with Strasko tracking Township employee hours for pick up and planting as the required match for the cost of the grant trees.

2. STC members and Strasko also discussed close out requirements for the grant and drafting a press release for the bare root tree grant award to promote the program and meet grant requirements.

ii. Community Roots with PPL

1. Wisniewski briefly discussed that she is still tracking communication for the PPL grant, that she has not heard any updates from the Township Arborist regarding the PPL grant, and asked Strasko if there has been word about the planting plans for Old Orchard Park. Strasko stated that she has not heard anything yet, that she recently spoke with Liggett regarding other tree items and that last she heard, Liggett planned on having plans for the group in December. Wisniewski asked Strasko to check in with Liggett for updates.

6. Public Comment

- a. There was no public present to comment.

7. For the Good of the Order

- a. Wisniewski briefly discussed updating the annual report to present to the BoS summarizing what the STC has accomplished with Romano and asked him to take the lead on the report.
- b. STC members also discussed possibly expanding the approved species list due to the other tree species included on recent plans the group has reviewed. STC members discussed focusing on native trees and asked Bush to complete some research for other native and acceptable species to include.
- c. Wisniewski thanked Strasko and Hilbert for the grant tree pickup.
- d. Wisniewski and Romano also discussed goals for memorial trees, that trees would need to be proposed and approved, how they would be planted, possibilities of sponsors for memorial tree plantings, and areas that could accommodate memorial planting other than Mill Race Park.

8. Next meeting: December 5, 2024

- a. STC members discussed and came to a consensus to hold the December 5th meeting at 5:30PM rather than 6:30PM to accommodate Strasko's schedule.

9. Adjournment

- a. Bush made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Romano seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:18PM.