

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2024, 6:30PM, 3 Weller Place, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Paul Strasko, Shannon Wisniewski, Sandi Bush, Patrick Romano, David Demopoulis, Paige Strasko and Lee Hilbert.
- b. Valerie Liggett was present on video call.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:34PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 11, 2024.

- a. Bush made a motion to approve the minutes from July 11, 2024, and Romano seconded. The minutes were passed by voice vote and Demopoulis abstained.

3. Old Business

a. Tree Ordinance

i. Recommend Updating Permit Fee Schedule

- 1. Wisniewski stated that she planned on attending the Board of Supervisors meeting and Mr. Strasko stated that most STC members should be there.
- 2. Wisniewski also discussed updates and changes to the tracking spreadsheet for tree notices between STC members and Code Enforcement.
- 3. Mr. Strasko, Romano, and Wisniewski briefly discussed if permits should be required for residents who want to plant trees in the Township right-of-way. STC members discussed waiving a fee for a planting permit, wanting to confirm that residents are planting the right tree in the right place, possibly using the topic for a future newsletter article, what is included in the ordinance, what the STC is authorized to do, requests for emergency access planning for tree locations, and discussing further once the permit process has been completed by more residents. Demopoulis asked clarifying questions about the tree permits. STC members asked Ms. Strasko to send Demopoulis the link to the approved tree ordinance and Wisniewski would share the tracking spreadsheet. Demopoulis stated that he could connect the tracking spreadsheet to his mapping software and members briefly discussed.
- 4. Wisniewski discussed a recent tree removal she saw on Broad Street and STC members discussed replanting strategy, issues with resident turnover, and discussed if they should send the tree ordinance notification letter to local and regional real estate agents to inform their clients looking to buy homes in Palmer. Members

discussed further and agreed to send a letter to real estate agents. Wisniewski asked if Demopoulis would help compile a mailing list and he agreed.

5. Wisniewski also discussed scheduling a meeting with Township managers to discuss directional and process questions from STC members, who would be available, timing for a meeting, and managers' availability. Ms. Strasko stated the meeting could only be with two members if topics discussed could be on a public meeting agenda to follow the Sunshine Act. STC members discussed wanting to capture all members thoughts and questions, how to follow the Sunshine Act, and clarifying if there could be three members present or not. Ms. Strasko stated she would discuss this with Township managers.

b. Membership/Newsletters/Publicity

- i. Bush stated that she sent out the draft article to members, briefly discussed articles for August that were removed due to lack of space, topics that were planned for November, using August articles later since they would not be right for the season, and finalized ideas for November. Wisniewski suggested changing language to an article describing vine removal to indicate vines should be removed from the entire tree.

c. Palmer Days Participation

i. Logistics

1. STC members briefly discussed the poster board printed for Palmer Days. Wisniewski discussed draft sign-in sheets for Palmer Days, and members discussed setting expectations with residents upfront who sign up for a big tree to be submitted. Wisniewski discussed the intent of the big tree program to get people interested in and talking about trees.
2. STC members also discussed their schedule for attending and tabling Palmer Days. Bush stated she would be on vacation. Wisniewski clarified that Ms. Strasko would print handouts and materials and bring them for set up at Palmer Days.
3. STC members also discussed promoting their fall planting event at Palmer Days and all agreed. Ms. Strasko discussed a frame display for the table and mentioned advertising on Facebook.

d. Old Orchard Park Replanting

- i. Wisniewski explained the high-level concept of park plantings and initiatives that the STC and other Township stakeholders have planned for the park in the future, the upfront cost for maintenance on existing pine trees in the park, timing of planning, general concepts for planting areas,

low-maintenance plantings, reducing mow areas in the park, and using grant opportunities for plant purchasing.

- ii. Liggett explained her experience as a landscape architect and how Gilmore approaches planting plans and concepts with clients, having options and the commission having input on various concepts. STC members also discussed the park being used as a sledding hill in the winter to keep in mind during design and wanted to be conscious of Liggett's workload. Liggett stated that she would look at her schedule and share when she would expect to have planting concepts completed. Liggett asked about grant details and Wisniewski stated that she would connect Liggett with the grant coordinator she spoke with for grant information, plant availability and planning.
- iii. STC members asked Ms. Strasko to send Demopoulis Liggett's previous report for Old Orchard Park, and discussed volunteers available through Home Depot to complete the planting after a plan is finalized. STC members also discussed other volunteer opportunities and organizations to partner with to complete the park planting in the future.

e. Fall Planting Event

- i. Wisniewski stated that the date for October 19th at the Community Center was confirmed by Community Center staff. Wisniewski also discussed retaining a donut truck for the event with Naz-o-Nut, pricing for the truck, her discussion of amounts and pricing with the business owner, attendance estimates and donations or sponsorships to help cover the food truck cost.

4. New Business

a. Homeowner's Insurance Discussion

- i. Ms. Strasko stated that she added this item as an FYI to STC members and explained the conversation she had with a resident's tree contractor from the permit reviewed and denied at the previous meeting. Ms. Strasko explained that the contractor discussed insurance issues from the homeowner, stating that the resident's homeowner's insurance was threatening to drop them if they do not remove the street tree. Ms. Strasko explained to the committee members about a conversation with the Township solicitor, and procedure if this type of paperwork is received from residents in the future.

b. STC/Township Meeting Request

- i. This agenda item was discussed under Old Business.

c. 2215 Newlins Mill Road Plan Review

- i. STC members reviewed the landscape plan provided for the proposed project and compared it to an aerial photo of the current site. STC members agreed to comment on the plan that there was no species list

provided and no key to indicate what species would be planted where. Members also commented that there were not enough trees planted along Newlins Mill Road or Tatamy Road, and that the trees should be spread out along the berm of the stormwater basin.

- ii. Comments were finalized and compiled onto the planning comment sheet for submission by Ms. Strasko.

d. Street tree Replacement Species

- i. Ms. Strasko stated that she will be asking for approval to advertise the street tree replacement bid at the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting and wanted to check with the group regarding species for replacement. Ms. Strasko and STC members discussed utilities present in planting areas, sidewalks, and long-term homeowner maintenance. STC members discussed and decided to keep the same species but to swap the American Hawthorne for the Eastern Red Bud tree species.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. Ms. Strasko stated that she had no updates from the Board of Supervisors.

b. Tree City USA/Grant trees available

i. Tree Pennsylvania

ii. Bare Root Trees- Bike Path Replant behind Anthony Ct

1. Wisniewski explained the bare root grant briefly, and the STC member's ideas for replant locations. Wisniewski asked Hilbert if he had any concerns with the locations they had chosen on the bike path and Fox Run Park, and Hilbert stated no. STC members also briefly discussed grant requirements including a map of planting locations and application submission timing.
2. Wisniewski also discussed moving forward with the grant submission, provided members with an available species list for the grant and asked if the other members had any specific species they wanted to see or had questions about.
3. Wisniewski also discussed tree planting deadlines and guidelines through the grant, other stipulations such as water bags for trees, heights of tree species for planting and locations.

6. Public Comment

- a. There was no public present to comment.

7. For the Good of the Order

- a. There was nothing additional for the Good of the Order.

8. Next Meeting: September 5, 2024

9. Adjournment

- a.** Wisniewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Bush seconded. The meeting adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 9:07PM.