

**Palmer Township, Northampton County**

**Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes**

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, 6:30PM, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room, 3 Weller Place**

**1. Roll Call**

- a. Present: Shannon Wisniewski, David Demopoulos, Pat Romano, Sandi Bush, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert, and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: Andrew Melhem.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**

- a. Romano made a motion to approve the minutes with one amendment, and Wisniewski seconded. Bush abstained from the vote. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**3. Old Business**

**a. Newsletters/Community Outreach**

**i. Q3: Arbor Day (due mid-June)**

- 1. Wisniewski said for June we want to include a whole page for Arbor Day. She said we should include photos from the event and also include a thank you to all the sponsors. Concerns were raised about photo use of children and the Commission agreed to check with Township Staff regarding policies.

**ii. Q4: Street Planting (due mid-September)**

- 1. The group discussed when it would be best to feature the Street Tree Planting Program considering the current planting timeline. It was agreed that a decision would be made after more progress is made.

**iii. Q1: 2026 (due mid-December)**

**b. Grants**

**i. Tree Pennsylvania Bare Root Spring 2025 closure**

- 1. Wisniewski stated that the grant report was submitted. She reminded the Commission to log all of their volunteer hours considering they have financial value and will be needed for future in-kind grants. Demopoulos asked if hours should be tracked retroactively and Wisniewski suggested that they can be, but only within the current calendar year.

**ii. Tree Pennsylvania Bare Root Fall 2025**

- 1. Wisniewski stated that the application process is being revised and that a webinar will be held on May 12 at 10am, with all members encouraged to attend. She also said a proposal will be presented at

the Recreation Advisory Board on May 20<sup>th</sup>. She said the proposal will focus on Keystone Park as the 2025 planting site.

2. The group acknowledged that the Old Orchard Project has been taken over by the Stormwater Authority. Wisniewski suggested employing a cost benefit analysis to determine if existing pine trees should be removed and replanted or if maintenance should continue.

**c. Earth Day Recap**

- i. The group agreed that the event was well attended and went smoothly. The materials they brought to the event were well received, and they look forward to participating in future events.

**d. Arbor Day Recap**

- i. The group agreed that the event went well for the most part. They agreed that the educational games and child involvement were well received. They also stated that the message delivery was strong, specifically during library programming, and that the raffle and overall event turnout was positive.
- ii. The group discussed ways to improve for the next event, which focused on smoother raffle logistics, additional tents and chairs, visual aids and instructional signage for children. The group also shared ideas regarding how to improve food truck wait times which centered around adding a second truck or exploring pizza or ice cream options for more expedited service.

**4. Street Tree Program**

**a. Mapping Review/Recommendations & Next Steps**

- i. The group reviewed individual properties using maps and photos, focusing on overhead utility lines, sidewalk and driveway locations, property lines, existing vegetation and past tree removals, and sightline triangles when near intersections. They agreed to emphasize giving each eligible requestor at least one tree, which could be expanded if availability allows.
- ii. The group discussed how species for plantings would be selected, agreeing that the goal is to limit options to five species per size range. They agreed that there would be three size ranges: less than 25 feet, 25-40 feet, and 40 feet plus. They suggested that requestors should rank their top three choices to accommodate availability at the nursery.
- iii. Wisniewski stated that she would communicate with Arch Wild to help finalize species lists and check market availability.
- iv. The group discussed what the next steps would be. They agreed to continue evaluating sites and to prepare an RFP based on all verified addresses. They agreed to prepare some kind of hand out for residents on

State roadways since they will be ineligible for this program. They also decided that there would be a handful of properties they would need to drive by to verify unclear planting locations and conditions, and Bush volunteered to complete them. They agreed to continue gathering data on the right of way widths and eventually compiling everything into a final document.

- v. Discussion was held regarding rental properties and their relation to tree responsibility. Concerns were raised about tenants reliably maintaining potential new plantings, but the group agreed that if the property owner assumes responsibility, then renters may be included. The group agreed that a sign-off sheet should be required that outlines tree care and maintenance as part of their commitment.
- vi. As for next steps, the group decided that the RFP should aim to go out in July, with a presentation to the Board of Supervisors occurring in June.
- vii. The Commission agreed to complete a site visit to each property to stake out where the trees would best be suitable for planting. They will request that the resident reach back out to the Township to confirm that they agree with the proposed planting locations. This process will involve the assessment of utility conflicts and possibly PA One Calls.

**b. Resident hand-out materials**

- i. **Proposed: insects, proper mulching, pruning, topping, arborist**

**5. New Business**

**a. Website Resources Organization/Update**

- i. The group reviewed a proposed list of links and educational materials for the Commissions website page which included links to the Arbor Day Foundations and tools like native tree finders. They agreed to review and finalize the list at the next meeting.

**b. Approved Tree List**

- i. Wisniewski noted some discrepancies between the Township's approved tree list and PA's invasive species guidance. She volunteered to revise the list and present an updated version when complete. Trexler confirmed that he would check with Township staff to see if these revisions would need Board of Supervisor approval.

**c. Social Media Campaign**

- i. Due to time constraints, this item was tabled.

**d. Educational Materials**

- i. Due to time constraints, this item was tabled.

**e. Speaking Opportunities**

- i. Due to time constraints, this item was tabled.

**f. Palmer Days August 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>**

- i. Due to time constraints, this item was tabled.

**6. Reports**

**a. Board of Supervisors**

- i. None at this time.

**7. Public Comment**

**8. For the Good of the Order**

- a. Trexler announced that the Township received its 3-year recognition from Tree City USA. He mentioned that the Public Works Department will be updating signage across the Township with reflective tags.
- b. Demopoulos stated that the first meeting for the Bushkill Greenway Master Plan will occur on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and that the Commission has been encouraged to help promote the meeting via social media.
- c. **Tree Tender (TreePennsylvania's EJ grant) May 20<sup>th</sup> Upper Macungie**
  - i. Wisniewski stated that this will be open to staff and Commission members, and it is free with meals included. Wisniewski endorsed the value of these training sessions.
- d. **LV EAC Network Social & Roundtable Discussion June 11<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8, BTCC**

**9. Next meeting: June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**10. 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 8:55PM.