

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

June 5th, 2025, 6:30PM, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room, 3 Weller Place

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Shannon Wisniewski, David Demopoulos, Pat Romano, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert, and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: Sandi Bush and Andrew Melhem.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 1st, 2025

- a. Romano made a motion to approve the minutes, and Demopoulos seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business

a. Newsletters/Community Outreach

i. Q4: Street Planting (due mid-September)

- 1. Wisniewski reminded the Commission of the due date.

ii. Q1: 2026 (due mid-December)

- 1. Wisniewski reminded the Commission of the due date.

b. Grants

i. Tree Pennsylvania Bare Root Spring 2025

- 1. Wisniewski stated that the Commission received support from Dan McKinney & the Recreation Advisory Board for the proposed planting plan at Keystone Park. She said the next step is to present the plan to the Board of Supervisors at their July 23rd meeting. Wisniewski mentioned that she will have to request an extension due to the grant application deadline occurring prior to the BOS meeting. She said she wants to ensure the Commission, and the Township remain in good standing with the grant administrators.

ii. Tree Pennsylvania Bare Root Fall 2026

- 1. The Commission discussed some long-term planning & strategy for these grants moving forward. Wisniewski stated that the challenge is the narrow 30-day grant window, which leaves little time for review and approvals. Kistler suggested creating a backlog of pre-approved projects to avoid any last-minute issues. Wisniewski agreed and stated that options for new park trees are diminishing, so the attention may need to be diverted to street trees or median replacements. Kistler noted that since Public Works is responsible for planting these trees, plantings at individual properties rather than a centralized location could present more difficulties.

2. The Commission also discussed the results of the planting from the previous Fall & Spring rounds, stating that the Fall planting at Fox Run Park were very successful while most of the Spring plantings on Nulton Avenue are failing, despite tedious watering and care. Hilbert mentioned that the Spring trees had smaller root systems than the Fall trees which could explain the difference. Kistler suggested that the Commission could only consider Fall planting if this is to become a recurring issue. Wisniewski stated that she will set up a site visit with the Forester to evaluate the Spring trees further. She also mentioned that if the Township only applies for Fall rounds, they would be considered a new applicant every time, which would result in a lower initial tree allocation and would also require a mandatory site visit and webinar each time.

c. Street Tree Program

- i. Wisniewski and Trexler discussed the progress made so far with the program, stating that responses are continuing to be collected from residents in regard to the proposed tree stake locations. He said some residents were removed from the program due to residing on State roads, HOA restrictions and for a lack of space within certain cartway's. Trexler said that roughly 45 locations remain active, while additional residents have been added based on replanting needs and some late responses. He stated that some residents have also requested two trees rather than one. Wisniewski asked Trexler to follow up with residents who have not yet responded to the outreach, and also with those who have specific property related questions.
- ii. Wisniewski stated that once the location is agreed to for the plantings, residents will receive a customized tree species list based on presence of sidewalks and utilities. From there, each resident will choose their 1st, 2nd and 3rd preference for the tree(s) to be planted. She said there will be three different lists, each based on Penn State Extension's recommendations for height categories, under 30', under 45' and over 45'. Wisniewski stated that tree selection will depend on nursery availability while also mentioning that if a resident requests a smaller tree they can be moved into a lower height category. Wisniewski stated that she will draft the lists and send them to Trexler.
- iii. Wisniewski stated that the target planting date remains mid to late October of this year. She said by the end of June we should finalize tree selections. During the month of July, we can continue to gather responses while also drafting and advertising the RFP. Then, during August & September we will request BOS approval and award the contract.

- iv. At Wisniewski's request, Trexler presented the Commission with a draft Agreement for tree recipients. She said the purpose of the agreement is to ensure the recipients understand the maintenance responsibilities, placement and expectations. No objections were raised from the Commission, and a more comprehensive review of the Agreement would occur prior to the next meeting.

d. Approved Tree List

- i. Wisniewski stated that, in conjunction with Penn State Extension's Urban Forestry recommendations, the approved tree list should be updated. She said the update aims to improve climate adaptability and remove pest-prone species. Trexler stated that he is uncertain if this update can be put into effect without a new ordinance amending the current ordinance in place. Wisniewski stated that the approved tree list can be incorporated into the presentation to the BOS on the 23rd.

4. New Business

a. 601 S. 25th Street – Drive Thru Restaurant Landscape Plan Review

- i. Wisniewski stated that the site is proposed to be a 2-lane drive thru with 75 parking spaces. She said the plan is to demolish the current building and construct the new building closer to 25th Street while also turning the former pharmacy site into a parking lot. The Commission noted the lack of landscaping on the plan, stating that there are no proposed planting islands, shade trees, or greenery around the building or parking area. They also mentioned that 75 parking spaces seem disproportionate for a fast-food restaurant. For the review sheet, the Commission asked the developer to reconsider the number of parking spaces, consider planting trees around the building and within the parking lot, consider submitting a formal landscape plan, and to consider installing islands within the lot for the planting of shade trees. Wisniewski used Wendy's near Sheetz as an example of underused parking with heavy drive-thru usage.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. Township Supervisor Charles Bellis III stated that for any and all future events, including but not limited to Arbor Day, remember to recognize any BOS members in attendance. Wisniewski acknowledged his comment and confirmed that this would be the case at all future Commission events.

6. Public Comment

- a. None at this time.

7. For the Good of the Order

- i. Wisniewski made note of the LV EAC Network Social & Roundtable Discussion being held on June 11th at BTCC from 6:30-8pm to remind the Commission.
- ii. Wisniewski proposed the cancellation of the July 3rd meeting due to the holiday and no objection was made.

8. Next meeting: August 7th, 2025

9. Adjournment

- a. Romano made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Demopoulos seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:33PM.