

## **Palmer Township, Northampton County**

### **Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes**

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

#### **1. Roll Call**

- a. Present: Shannon Wisniewski, Sandi Bush, David Demopoulos, Lee Hilbert, and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: Patrick Romano and Andrew Melhem.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

- a. Bush made a motion to approve the minutes, and Wisniewski seconded. Demopoulos abstained from the vote. The motion passed by voice vote.

#### **3. Old Business**

##### **a. Newsletters/Community Outreach**

- i. Wisniewski stated the May newsletter needs to be submitted by mid-March, and there were two newsletter articles already proposed. One was referencing spring planting, and the other is referencing the Free Street Tree program solicitation. Wisniewski mentioned the addition of a QR code that takes you to Penn State Extension for planting help, and Bush asked that the same link be added to the Shade Tree's website page. Demopoulos stated the Free Street Tree program is a good idea. Wisniewski explained how she envisions the program working, which includes residents emailing the Commission, the Commission checking out the property to ensure it can accommodate a tree, and then the resident being given a list of species to pick from. Once a tree is selected, the Commission will purchase the tree, and Public Works will then pick up and plant the tree. Wisniewski asked Hilbert for his thoughts, mentioning that the tree planting would occur later in the year. Hilbert said he would refer to Scott Kistler to make the decision. Wisniewski said she will reach out to him. Hilbert asked where the trees would be picked up, and Wisniewski said she would be going to a nursery to purchase them. Hilbert recommended the nursery where Public Works usually purchase their trees from. Wisniewski stated that the idea behind this program is to plant trees where residents would be more inclined to take care of them. Demopoulos asked if there is a plan in place if a lot of residents request a tree, considering we are limited to 10 trees this year. Wisniewski said this would be a great problem to have. She also said it would be handled on a first come, first served basis, while also ensuring the properties can accommodate what the residents are requesting. She said we can keep everyone's name and contact information down for future programs.

**b. Grants**

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

1. Wisniewski said that Grant Administrator received 43 applications requesting over 700 trees in total. The review is expected to be done by the end of March. As of right now, the anticipated pickup date for the trees is early to mid-April. Wisniewski said that if we receive the grant, all of the trees will be going in Keystone Park.

**ii. Community Roots (PPL) – Old Orchard Park**

1. Wisniewski stated that a call took place with herself, Trexler, HRG, and Matt Gunther from the Stormwater Department at the Township to discuss this project. Wisniewski said that she informed HRG that all work the Commission has done up to this point for Old Orchard Park has been exploratory, and that the Stormwater Authority has the right of way to complete whatever projects are necessary to be completed in the park. Wisniewski said that HRG would take our projects conceptual plans and try to work them into what work they will be doing. She said any landscaping questions or concerns would be brought to the Commission, but at this point the Old Orchard Park project is out of our hands. Trexler said he attends all the Stormwater meetings, so he can inform the Commission of any project updates when they come up. Wisniewski said we can table this for the time being and discuss it on an as needed basis going forward.

**c. Arbor Day 2025**

- i. Wisniewski said we were able to secure a sponsor for our trees, and that she is still trying to communicate with the food truck. She sent Trexler a list of items to purchase, which included raffle prizes from local stores. Wisniewski stated she still has to complete the production of the program for the day, which she is working on, and she also needs to do a site visit to the Police Station area where the tree work will be done and to let the Police Department know of the event and further discuss some of the logistics of the event.
- ii. Wisniewski and Hilbert discussed which trees would need to be removed prior to planting occurring. Demopoulos asked if this would be a remove and replace, and Wisniewski said it will be two new trees, new shrubs, and another new tree at another location near the police station's front door.

**d. Earth Day 2025**

- i. Wisniewski said we will have a table at this event where we would like to hand out information and also some kind of craft or other materials to attendees. Wisniewski said she recently received some good information

about a program that the Pennsylvania Resource Conservation Center is currently running. The program offers one free tree for every nonnative or invasive species removed from a property, with a limit of 5 per property. She said there are 5 locations across the state where tree pickup is occurring and the two closest locations to us are both a 90 minute drive away. She said residents have to pre-register for the event and also supply photographic evidence of the invasive species being removed from the property in order to qualify for the trees. She said it is a cool program, but it also requires some effort on the part of the applicants. She asked the program personnel if the trees could be picked up by the Public Works Department so that residents did not need to travel as far, but the answer was no. In the future they are hoping to do more regional programs like this. Wisniewski said at this time, we can help by handing out information and spreading the word to residents at the event. Bush said she thinks it is a good idea and thinks the Commission should provide pictures of example invasive/non-native species for residents. Wisniewski said she will develop the materials to have on display at the Earth Day event. Wisniewski asked Trexler if the Township has any easels for display purposes, and he was not sure but stated that he could check to see what we have. Wisniewski stated she will continue to develop all of the materials for the Earth Day event. Bush asked if the Commission should be present at the event for the whole day, and Wisniewski said she will be there all day, and anyone is welcome to join her to help. Demopoulos stated that he would be there.

**e. Memorial Trees**

- i. Wisniewski stated that she spoke with Romano about the program, and that Romano has had great discussions with the funeral homes up to this point. She said we will draft a flyer for the group to look at, which we intend to leave at Palmer funeral homes. We would also like to advertise this in as many ways as possible. Romano also told Wisniewski that he received some quote for plaques for the trees, which came back way more expensive than expected. She said we are now looking into expandable tags for the trees that will grow with the trees when they are planted, which will be more cost effective. She said Romano will provide more information at the next meeting.

**4. New Business**

**a. Bushkill Creek Greenway Plan STC Delegate Request**

- i. Wisniewski stated that Craig Beavers, Township staff, sent out an email looking for a delegate from the STC to participate in the Greenway Plan to provide feedback and input. She said they are looking to meet on a

quarterly basis. Wisniewski said that she spoke with Demopoulos earlier about him participating in this, and he agreed.

**b. 2620 Kingston Road – Car Wash – Plan Review**

- i. The Commission agreed with alternating the tree species along the street. They also agree with the change of species made from the previous plan submittal. The Commission requested the applicant to consider replacing the grass area with a native area, as well as adding a buffer between the car wash and the learning center.

**c. 1280 Main Street – Rutter’s – Plan Review**

- i. The Commission asked the applicant to amend the plan to completely remove the burlap around the newly planted trees. The Commission also asked the applicant to update the planting schedule to reflect the 7 total Honey Locust trees as shown in the plan since the schedule only shows 5 being planted. Also, the Commission asked the applicant to consider street trees within the rectangular cutout on the plan. They suggested the trees could be 25 feet tall or less to avoid the power lines in that area.

**5. Reports**

**a. Board of Supervisors**

- i. None at this time.

**b. Tree City USA**

- i. Wisniewski asked Trexler when we needed to resubmit the application, and Trexler said it was already done.

**6. Public Comment**

- a. None at this time.

**7. For the Good of the Order**

- a. Demopoulos asked how information would be shared within the Greenway project committee, and Wisniewski informed him that he would be added to the email group for the committee where all communication will occur.
- b. Wisniewski announced that the PA Environmental Justice grant program will have training on March 31<sup>st</sup> in Easton from 830am to 330pm. Wisniewski said it is free to attend, and she already registered. She said it will cover all things trees.
- c. Wisniewski said she will be attending Easton’s Arbor Fest on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April at Lower Hackett Park from 1pm to 5pm. She said it will be a great event and encouraged everyone to attend if they are able to.

**8. Next meeting: April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**

**9. Adjournment**

- a. Bush made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Demopoulos seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM.