

Attendees: Commissioners Trish Gallagher (Chair), Joe Ascenzi, John Kennedy, Anna Nicholaides, Steve Sacavage; Assoc. Members Andrew Christy, Tanya Borman-Voit, Robin Eisman; Township representative: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer.

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Gallagher at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:15 pm.

Agenda items:

(1) Minutes from the Dec. 2023 meeting were approved.

(2) 2024 Plans – Major Events/Expenses [Andrew C, Trish G, All]

- a) Tree giveaways: Andrew C. has been in touch w/the Arbor Day Foundation about providing support (outreach, coordination, etc.) for this event, something they do with other STCs, groups. It would cost \$10-15/tree but would free up a lot of volunteer time for working on other things. Consensus was to try it as a pilot for the spring give-away if Parks Dept. agrees.
- b) Demonstration gardens: Andrew C is in contact w/the Abington EAC re: the joint project of a native-plant demonstration garden at the Township library. The group discussed possible places for 1 or 2 additional such gardens in high-visibility areas. Several possibilities raised: Penbryn Park; Hallowell Park; Maple Ave entrance to Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary; Grove House after stream project is completed; others can be considered as well.
- c) Hiring a consulting arborist: Trish G and John K to meet w/Karl Lukens on Fri am, will discuss the process for hiring, administering this position.
- d) Other: There was a suggestion for a brochure highlighting notable trees and/or trees of common species in this area that could be developed for public education/engagement (an "Abington tree trail").

(3) Tree City USA Update [Trish G, All]

- Abington has had 'Tree City' certification for 16 yrs, and also qualified for the 'growth award' for 10 of 16 years. Discussion on whether annual effort for this is worthwhile: Trish G. notes that the basic Tree City certification is needed for various grants. As to whether the additional growth-award work is worthwhile, Trish feels it is insofar as it bolsters STC's credibility/gravitas when applying for grants.
- Whether/how much Township staff can help with this is discussed; Ashley McIlvaine will be contacted by Trish.
- Suggestion made to do the annual STC report in January to coincide with doing the Tree City application, so as not to duplicate effort.

(4) STC Structure [Trish G, John K, All]

- This will also be discussed at the meeting Fri w/Karl Lukens.
- Structure of the STC, i.e., roles of chair, other commissioners, and associate STC members and other volunteers is meant to be flexible.
- Discussion of the administrative/mundane tasks that need to be performed, and recognition of their necessity to enable STC's functioning and carrying out its mission; Chair Gallagher requests

that all STC members and volunteers step up to do these, possibly on rotating basis. Discussion of need to prioritize tasks.

- John K, Steve S, Robin E volunteer to refine & prioritize John's list of tasks and share w/whole STC for further input.

(5) Announcements / Other Updates [All]

- DCNR's "PA Outdoor Corps" accepted Abington's application for invasives removal and will provide a team of young adults to work in Hallowell Park, Edgehill Woods, and Baederwood Park/Coates Preserve (as time permits). They're scheduled to work Apr 29 through May 02 (Mon – Thurs). Robin E is coordinating this; will coordinate separately with Steve S and Anna N re: Hallowell and Baederwood/Coates. Joe A offers to help with identification of native vs. non-native *Aralia*.
- TTF-WP is scheduled to do live-staking of the stream in Hallowell; being coordinated by Anna N. *[Post-meeting note: This was originally scheduled to happen before the invasives removal, but has since been rescheduled for after that, to May 03 (Sat).]*
- Trish G notes that bidding has begun on Phase II of the Ardsley Wildlife Sanctuary project, though there may not be enough funding for it.
- Trish G & Andrew C hope to meet w/Engineering and Code Enforcement to discuss the proposed ordinance update. Andrew C has been in touch w/someone at Natural Lands Trust who has experience in this area.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman