

Attendees: Commissioners Patricia Gallagher, John Kennedy, Robin Eisman, Anna Nicholaides; Assoc. Members Andrew Christy, Kristin Gaenssle; Travis D'Onofrio; Township representative: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer; Consulting Arborist John Hosbach.

Meeting called to order at 7:35 pm; adjourned 9:30 pm.

Note: agenda order was modified; notes from each item appear in order discussed.

Agenda items:

(3) Connecting w/Homeowners (Buying/Selling) for Tree Planting Opportunities

- Guest Mike Nicholaides proposed an initiative to encourage homeowners to plant trees, especially sellers. He suggested the STC offering to help plant trees for sellers, perhaps even helping to do so; for buyers, providing tree selection guidance to new homeowners (~250-300 in Abington last year) and perhaps even help with planting. He could develop a program to list homes on the market or newly-sold to facilitate this.
- Questions discussed: How much work would this entail on STC's part? (Depends on how many homeowners would be interested, what help would be given.) Timing of contacts? Perhaps limit help to providing information? Interactions w/street-tree program?
- Working group to study this: Mike N., Anna N., Travis D'O., Robin E.

(1) Minutes from the Dec 2024 meeting were approved with one correction.

(2) Recap of 2024 Activity at Library

Andrew C: On recommendation of Township Arborist (John H.), a handful of trees were removed. // Library has reserved \$2000 in its budget for new trees; it has requested STC's help w/an overall landscape plan.

(4) 2025 Priorities & Plans

- (a) Invasives removal/management plan: Trish G. working on RFP for invasives management plan by private contractor. Input needed from Parks & Rec Dept. // Invasives management working group is STC's Trish G. and Andrew C. plus two people from EAC.
- (b) Ongoing care for new trees: Watering on seasonal basis seems expensive (per preliminary estimates for season-long contract), perhaps could be done on an as-needed basis, or only for currently-planted or selected trees. \$18K to be reserved for watering and maintaining (pruning/mulching) extant, newly-planted trees. Discussion to be continued.
- (c) Other: See other items in minutes.

(5) Ask-the-Arborist Event

Dates for events confirmed: Apr. 3 (Thurs) & Sep. 18 (Thurs) 2025.

(6) Tree Ordinance Revision Effort

Andrew C.: Was meeting in Oct. w/Code Enforcement and Ashley McIlvaine (Asst Township Mgr). // Code enforcement sent comments on proposed updates at end of Dec. // Meeting w/Township, including Code Enforcement, set for Jan 28.

(7) Updates (if Available)

- (a) SEPTA line slope stabilization: [John H.] Project will proceed. Once trees cut down, John H. and SEPTA landscaper will meet and suggest trees/other landscaping for affected houses.

No updates on (b) Memorial tree planting (Highland Elem. Sch.), (c) Social media/newsletter, (d) Boy Scout Preserve.

(8) Other Business

- (a) STC commissioner appointment: No update.
- (b) Tree City USA application: Trish G. doing application, Township not yet ready to accept responsibility; will include Growth Award application.
- (c) Other:
 - John H. requests that development plans that he needs to review as Township Arborist be provided to him ≥ 2 weeks before comments due. Also, developers should present plans at public STC meeting, perhaps joint STC/EAC meeting.
 - St Basil's development: Developer did not address STC comments at all.

Meeting ended 9:30 pm.