

Notes From STC meeting of Feb 2024

13 Feb 2024

Attendees: Commissioners Trish Gallagher (Chair), Joe Ascenzi, John Kennedy, Steve Sacavage; Assoc. Members Tanya Borman-Voit, Andrew Christy, Robin Eisman; Township representatives: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer, Tim Clark, Dir. of Engineering Services.

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Gallagher at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:10 pm.

Agenda items:

(1) Minutes from the Jan. 2024 meeting were approved.

(2) Resident concerns: Washington Lane Project

Chair TrishG. asked residents to present their concerns; total discussion about 30 min.

Invited guests: Jim Dietz (of Washington Ln) noted that he and other neighbors initially liked the sidewalk plan, recognized Wash. Ln. as unsafe for walking, but unhappy w/no. of trees to be taken down, have proposed alternate plan that would preserve trees; they have independent arborist report w/very different conclusions re:trees, ie, that most are healthy trees. Resident Seth Cooley noted that he's met w/STC in the past to walk the relevant stretch of Wash. Ln; feels that Township has failed to provide adequate info, eg, info given out earlier to residents omitted tree removal, and Township staff generally not responsive.

JoeA: Noted that he agreed w/original arborist's report; willing to look at new arborist report.

TrishG: Noted she'll pass comments on to Township; recommends that Township develop replanting plan (2 new:1 old tree) and share it w/residents; offered that STC will work w/Township and residents on replacing trees taken down as part of this project. Noted that STC can't advise on re-routing sidewalk, but willing to participate in Township/resident meeting. Asked residents to send arborist report to STC; STC will ask Township to meet again w/residents.

Art Magilner (Fairacres Rd): Agreed that not enough resident consultation took place. Cites macadam path along Greenwood Ave as example of possible alternative to sidewalk.

Nick Pillsbury (Wash. Ln): Noted trees on his property (11) now in "bad shape", will be happy to replace them. Noted that perhaps overall no. of trees planned for removal less than feared.

TrishG noted STC tree giveaway at end of April; this in addition to trees to be replaced by Township.

S.Cooley: Noted that no tree replacement plan has been given to residents. Residents were asked to sign permission for access to their properties.

(3) Ongoing Activities

a. Confirm STC Chair Coverage Feb-Apr [Trish]

JohnK will be interim chair. TrishG to check email sporadically.

b. Consulting Arborist [Trish/John]

TrishG, JohnK, AndrewC met w/Karl Lukens of Parks re: hiring a consulting arborist and/or landscaper. For discrete tasks costing >\$4100, there would be a bidding process w/a specific scope of work. For projects w/less well-defined scope (eg, advising on development plans), STC will write a proposal (RFP) and the Township will write up a contract w/max. \$ amount. JoeA, JohnK, SteveS volunteer to start drafting, using other township RFPs as model.

c. Ordinance Update – Code Enforcement Discussion [Andrew/Trish]

TrishG, AndrewC met w/Township Code Enforcement officers Kevin van Horn & Chris Platz, who suggested updating the current zoning ordinance vs creating a separate ordinance.

Proposed update would include permitting for tree removal.

Including heritage trees in proposed ordinance update was discussed.

AndrewC plans to send out new draft next week; may include some licensing requirement for tree work. Will ask Mike Narcowich at MCPC for input.

(4) Grants and Reports – Potential Grant for AWS [Robin/Trish]

RobinE, TrishG previously discussed potential Spring 2024 NFWF grant application, but agreed that grant planning should be longer-term, especially for grants requiring cost matches (Township funds). Parks Dept. needs to be involved in planning early on.

Township is now applying for Montco 2040 grant for Ardsley WP.

RobinE to suggest 5 projects to STC for upcoming grants; group to decide on priorities.

(5) Project Planning

a. Tree Giveaway Next Steps [Andrew]

Arbor Day Fdn will handle registration.

AndrewC, TanyaB-V met w/GGCA (Greater Glenside Civic Assoc.), which will be allowed to open their registration a week before open registration for trees.

b. Demonstration Gardens/Landscaping Update [Andrew]

A total of \$15K is available for trees and native plant gardens. RFP is almost finished for 2 gardens in Roslyn Park; will go out w/in next week. Location decided by STC/EAC joint committee, approved by K. Lukens.

c. PA Outdoor Corps Invasives Removal Project [Robin]

Administrative, on-site preparations and other plans progressing: online meeting to be held late Feb, contract being passed back and forth between Township and Student Conservation Association (working w/PA DCNR) for finalization.

Suggested that funds for PA Outdoor Corps be included in next year's budget.

(6) Miscellaneous Business

a. Task assignments for STC commissioners and associates [John, Steve]

JohnK, SteveS, RobinE met to develop list of tasks organized by type of task (eg, admin., communications, tools) and defined which roles (eg, STC chair, any volunteer) can fill each. Will send to whole STC for input. Also explored which tasks can potentially be done by Township.

Mailbox coverage (email) and process for handling resident concerns: TrishG: need to discuss further.

b. Hats, Headshots & Communications [Tanya]

TanyaB-V has taken over STC newsletter and social media accounts from AnnaN. Individuals can now post photos to STC Facebook page. Would like to highlight volunteers on social media; requests photos and bios of STC members.

Tanya proposed STC hats, committee agrees on buying about 10.

Idea: award for notable trees ("heritage trees").

Idea: community harvest day for people not harvesting their own fruit/nut trees.

c. Project/Task Tracking [Steve]

To be included under task assignments

d. ASD Liaison Progress [Anna & Steve]

AnnaN has been working on getting permission for trees at Glenside-Weldon campus, also at JrHS, with little cooperation from JrHS.

e. New Project Ideas for 2025

See above: to be discussed.

(7) Any Other Business – All (Time Permitting)

None

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman