

Notes From STC meeting of Apr 2024

09 Apr 2024

Attendees: Commissioners Joe Ascenzi, John Kennedy, Anna Nicholaides; Assoc. Members Tanya Borman-Voit, Andrew Christy, Robin Eisman; EAC representative: Cakky Evans; Township representative: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer.

Called to order by Commissioner Kennedy (Interim Chair) at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:20 pm.

Agenda items:

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

(2) Land Development Plans

2241 Old Welsh Road subdivision: [A joint STC / EAC meeting was held last week to review the plan sheets in person.] Discussion focused on the feasibility of preserving many of the trees, per development plans. Consensus was that developer seemed proactive in preserving and/or replacing trees and favoring native species.

Hopewell Vet Hospital (Cedar Rd.): Updates were not relevant to STC.

(3) Ongoing Activities

- Open STC commissioner positions: 2 positions will open up, 1 should be filled by an arborist. John K. to follow up w/Township re: procedural steps.
- Consulting arborist: Anna N. offers to contact an arborist previously involved in an STC project to gauge interest.
- Washington Ln project: No updates from Township on tree replacement plan. Discussion on possibility of working w/Abington Friends School, which has an arboretum. Cakky Evans of Abington EAC suggests replacing each mature tree removed with 3 saplings and using larger saplings.
- John K. will work with the Township on a proclamation for Arbor Day. In conjunction w/tree give-away, there will be a tree-planting in Crestmont Park for Arbor Day.
- Per Andrew C., Township is looking into posting a list of certified arborists for reference.

(4) Communications & Public Engagement Update (Tanya B-V)

- Many people were engaged at the recent 'Garden Festival' at Abington Library by Tanya B-V and Andrew C.
- Hats for core STC volunteers have been received, Tanya B-V will distribute them.
- Reminder to send in news/articles/etc for the monthly e-newsletter.
- There's now a more user-friendly link on the STC website for both newsletter and volunteering signups (thanks to Tanya B-V, Andrew C, Township staff).

(5) Upcoming Projects

- Tree Giveaway: Administrative & financial issues being finalized by Andrew C. Trees will be delivered Fri Apr 26.
- PA Outdoor Corps: Work to occur Apr 29 through May 02 at Hallowell, Edgehill, Coates.
- Hallowell live-staking of stream: To occur May 04, Sat, in cooperation w/TTF.

(6) Grove Park House/Garden (Donna Roehner, STC Vol.)

- The garden immediately adjacent to the house needs significant work.
- There may be a volunteer group coming from Ambler to help.
- Need to engage local (Abington) volunteers, with Parks & Rec doing any heavy work.
- Donna R would like to get Grove House cleaned up inside, especially so that important papers there on STC history can be archived. (The Township is applying for a grant to renovate the building, so cleanup may be required.)

(7) Miscellaneous Business:

- Suggestion from Anna N: to engage additional volunteers in parks, consider an “adopt-a-plot” model. Andrew C. notes successful model used at Pennypack Trust.
- [Presentation by Cakky Evans, EAC member] The Township will apply for a federal ‘Community Block Development Grant’ to implement its ‘Climate Action Plan’, which has been spearheaded by the EAC; application is due April 30. The EAC would like to include specific goals from the STC’s ‘Master Tree Action Plan’ in the application.
- Management of Japanese knotweed: Guest Ethan Simon, local resident, active in ecological restoration, presented a draft plan to manage the invasive knotweed in Coates Preserve (where he monitors water quality) and possibly Township-wide, especially along streams. There was consensus to further discuss the issue, particularly on a Township level.
- John K. noted that 1 tree at Crestmont Park may need to be moved to accommodate an annual festival there. Perhaps tree fencing should also be used to protect from cars?

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman