

Abington Shade Tree Commission
Minutes May Meeting
Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 7:30 pm via Zoom

Panelists: John K., Trish G., Robin E., Anna N., Travis D., Andrew C.

Minutes

1. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Minutes will be submitted for approval later.

General suggestion for the future: maybe we should put a short description of activities that have been completed in the agenda so we don't have to discuss it but it would still be on the record in the agenda.

2. LD 24-01 2241 Old Welsh Road final- feedback requested on final submission- John K

John K. noted that the developer made the suggested changes we recommended. One final recommendation: the developer offered to maintain several mature trees located in between the two structures. These trees should have tree protection and should be inspected during construction so that they will be able to survive the construction process. John Hosbach should be responsible for this as the Township's consulting arborist. He should be engaged to inspect the tree protection zones and make sure they are adequate and that heavy equipment isn't staged in the tree protection zone. Plans should note that tree protection zone and tree protection should be installed in accordance with the zoning ordinance (pp. 252-253)

3. 2026 Budget preliminary discussion of ideas – All

Budget ideas: Budgets will be due in August; we have requested the actual due date to Parks and Rec from Ashley. We're in the idea gathering stage right now, so people don't need to start writing budget requests yet.

Discussion:

Which of our budget items should be moved to Parks and Rec for management? With pilot projects like the consulting arborist, Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, installing native plant gardens, our function is to present ideas and pilot the projects, but ultimately, the Township needs to adopt them into their structure if they are to continue long term. We can still assist with writing budget requests, but we need to meet with Parks and Rec and Township management to determine which projects they intend to continue. (As of 6/5/25, a meeting has been requested, and we are waiting for a response from the Township.)

Items to be turned over to Township for management: planting and maintaining trees, PA Outdoor Corps, consulting arborist (STC is willing to write budget requests for these items).

Ideas/Questions:

- Do we need the MTAP implementation and education funds?

- Do we need tree ordinance education fund? Tree ordinance implementation?
- Cost matching for DCNR grants?
- Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT) is interested in hiring a volunteer coordinator, that would help with coordinating volunteer activities in Abington and neighboring Townships. Are we interested in writing a budget request for this position? Should we help Briarbush/Parks and Rec write this request if the Township is interested?

4. Volunteer recruitment – identifying projects- All

Andrew suggested that we identify some specific ideas for volunteers that would include an estimated number of hours per month. The suggestion is to recruit people for specific roles.

Suggestions:

- Point person for mulching
- Content for annual report
- Information gathering for Tree City USA
- Develop a package for small businesses who are looking for volunteer opportunities (e.g. Mom's, Giant)
- Administrative tasks
- Marketing and PR (to assist Tanya)
- Distributing flyers for tree giveaway in neighborhoods we wish to target

We could hold more events where people can come together and get interested and maybe subsequently get involved.

2025 is the 50th anniversary of STC – we could do a volunteer appreciation day in August/September – get people at “treepoint” and get them to volunteer. Suggestion: have a party to celebrate our anniversary - Kristin just started as an event coordinator at Merck – she could help Anna organize the party – use MTAP education money to fund it – with shelters in case it rains or have a rain date

5. Spring Tree Giveaway report – Andrew

Finished at 11:35. Gave away 300 trees. Went really smoothly. A few suggestions, but overall really went well. Maybe next spring giveaway 350 trees since there's more interest in trees in the spring. Good turnout from people where Tanya led a group to hand out flyers.

Someone (near Crestmont) requested help to get street trees be restored – can we identify a few trees for the giveaway that would be suitable for street tree planting? Also mentioned invasives cleanup and tree planting at a school near Crestmont (Willow Hill?). Donna Rohner said she would reach out to John.

6. Spring maintenance of recently planted public trees- mulching, repairing staking, watering devices, pruning-John K

- John summarized the list of trees we have planted over the past few years. John got info on how much contractors cost. Marie's company gave a day rate and the other

contractors gave a day rate. Included list of responsibilities. See attached from John. For watering, we could identify high risk trees and have them water them, ask neighbors, fire departments, etc. – our usual list of suspects

- Upcoming Volunteer Event at Glenside Weldon: **Saturday May 31, 9:00 a.m.-12 noon**, raindate **Sunday June 1** – John K, Travis volunteered. Anna had a mulching day at Hallowell, and it was very popular; Anna has a list of teenagers that need volunteer hours, she can contact them. Anna and John will coordinate. Anna will post on social media. It needs to be high quality mulch, we will buy it.
- We need to select a contractor to complete a portion of the park trees, including Crestmont, Pennbryn, Ethel Jordan, hopefully Hallowell. We will ask the contractors what they want to do about mulch.

7. Ongoing projects/program updates - if available:

- PA Outdoor Corps Sept 29-Oct 2 – plan activity for – Robin is soliciting suggestions for projects
 - Abington School District – Anna – Bob Curtain has asked Anna to wait until after the referendum. Anna has a petition from children who want trees on their playground.
 - Native plant gardens/maintenance at Roslyn Park project-Andrew-The project is moving along, everything is going according to plan
 - Edgehill Woods update-Robin is working to get the trees and shrubs she has planted.
 - Redeemer Valley Farm Spring tree planting/Arbor Day event – Recap -John K – great event, very nicely done, they had the \$\$ and several people picked trees, they're opening their outdoor kitchen this Saturday for an educational event. John owes them some help on the black willow trees for the wet area. There were at least 10 people from the organization there, at least half of which were tree tenders. John recommended that they set up their own tree tender group so they could get their own discounted trees through the tree tenders
 - On-going Redeemer Valley Farm- collaboration - John/Travis – happy with info provided, will be in touch when they have another project
 - Social media communications update / newsletter needs- Tanya – if you have any info, send it to her
 - Street Tree activity and requests – Andrew will write up a protocol – see additional info
 - Tree Ordinance revision effort- update on activity – Trish will follow up with Ashley (as of 6/5/25, STC is waiting for a response from Ashley)
 - Penn State Abington Campus – collaborating with Shelly Grinar – excellent outreach event on earth day, will continue to collaborate with them as opportunities arise.
8. 2024 -25 Annual report presented in July at general township meeting-Trish will work with Tanya to develop content; John/Anna/Robin will present in July. Suggested time is 5-10 minutes, so there will be about 5 slides. Highlights: tree giveaway, arborist, upcoming ordinance revision
9. General STC Business- Trish & John – AWS Phase II was awarded. STC committed \$5400 of external funds, we only have about \$3500 in our STC TD bank account.

Anderw suggested that we could use some of our unused budget for the balance of the funds

Upcoming important dates:

- June STC Meeting, Tuesday, June 10, 2025, 7:30 pm via zoom
- Ask the Arborist event – Thursday, September 18