

Notes From STC meeting of May 2024

14 May 2024

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

Called to order by Co-Chair Gallagher at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:20 pm.

Agenda items:

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

(2) Land Development Plans

1583 Rothley Avenue, resubmission: Developer had not addressed joint EAC/STC comments submitted previously. Decision made to return review request, ask developer to address those comments.

365 Cedar Rd: A plan had been reviewed and commented on jointly by EAC/STC c. 2 yrs earlier, but was then considered an "initial" plan. Trish G. and Joe A. agreed to visit the site.

(3) Consulting Arborist

- The official posting (RFP) has gone through legal review by the Township.
- Expectation/hope is to have someone hired by late summer.
- Discussion on asking Township to help advertise the position.

(4) One-Drive Access/Use

- Andrew C. and Tanya B-V. have organized the folder structure, made other improvements; further tweaks may be helpful.
- The spreadsheet including 2024 volunteer hours has been updated.

(5) Communications & Public Engagement / Format of STC Meetings

- Tanya B-V. has most of the articles & info ready for upcoming e-mail newsletter.
- Tanya would like to produce several "Volunteers at Work" signs for projects as they happen; consensus was to go ahead with that.
- Suggestion for Tanya to look into creating a comprehensive list of parks w/volunteer projects, what work is involved, and dates.
- Andrew C. looked into modifying STC meeting format w/Nathan V. & Grace Sekelewski (both Township staff): going forward, guests will be panelists online (vs only being able to join on audio) and will be asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting.

(6) Tree Give-away Recap

- Andrew C. reported a 15% no-show rate for residents who'd reserved trees (significantly decreased from the Fall 2023 rate), and feels that the paying the Arbor Day Fdn for their logistical support (registration, reminders to recipients, etc) was well worth it.
- Group agreed to continue w/Arbor Day Fdn for next give-away (Fall 2024).

(7) PA Outdoors Corps Recap

- Robin E. reported on a crew of young adults from DCNR/Student Conservation Assoc. that worked in several parks (Coates Preserve, Edgehill Woods, Hallowell Park) for 4 days about 2 weeks ago. Notes are lengthy – see addendum at the end.
- Robin felt that the crew was generally extremely helpful, and it would be good to apply for this program in the future, depending on other plans.

(8) Garden Installation at Roslyn Park

- Andrew C. reported that a contractor (Spruce Hollow from Mt. Airy) was hired to install the perennial garden and about a dozen trees in the next few weeks.

(9) Potential Festival Impact on Trees Recently Planted at Crestmont

- John K. reported that this turned out not to be an issue – post-festival, trees looked fine.

(10) Open STC Commissioner Positions

- Trish G. met w/Township Manager Manfredi who said the STC needs to make recommendations to the Bd. of Commissioners.

(11) Grove House/Park: No updates

(12) Fall Bare-root Tree Projects

- Discussion on need to start planning now.
- Suggestion to consult w/Parks' Chris Olimpo.
- When last discussed w/previous Parks head, was no overall plan for planting.

(13) Invasives Removal Efforts [and Other Projects]

- Trish G. notes that planned projects/grant proposals need to be informed by the MTAP (Master Tree Action Plan), w/agreement on general plans from Township commissioners and Parks Dept., given requirement of most grants for matching funds.
- John K. notes that significant invasives removal will require professional involvement (not just volunteer labor), followed by planting w/natives to prevent invasive regrowth.

(14) Miscellaneous

- Abington School Dist. properties: Both Anna N. and Steve S. spoke w/Bob Curtin, new head of ASD Maintenance, about adding trees to schools. Anna to meet w/Dr. Fecher (superintendent); she asked other STC members for input on individual plans for each elementary school. (Andrew C. already has a plan for Highland.)
- Adding trees to public spaces: Suggestion from Anna N: to engage additional volunteers in parks and/or for street medians, consider an "adopt-a-plot" model. Andrew C. notes successful model used at Pennypack Trust. Noted that design needs to account for ease of maintenance (mowing, etc).

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman

Addendum: detailed notes on Outdoor Corps work (Apr 29 through May 02, 2024)

Coates Preserve

- Worked along the entrance path/road (from Highland Ave), plus just off the trail at the end of the dam, and across the stream (along the path out to Baeder Rd).
- Primarily removed invasive *Lonicera* shrubs and *Euonymus alata* (burning bush) and Japanese barberry shrubs (with the tree wrench wherever possible, to remove the roots and prevent resprouting).
- Cut English ivy from trees, plus a bit of Asiatic bittersweet vine.

Edgehill Woods:

- Cut down some of the invasive *Lonicera* shrubs near where the Thomas house was (using tree wrenches wherever possible).
- Got rid of a lot of wineberry and other invasive vines from the spot just off the paved path off Edgecomb (where we put in a bunch of shrubs & trees last year); rescued a handful of spicebush and previously-planted trees from vines there.
- Removed some very serious English ivy from trees off the paved path that had to be sawed and crowbarred off (!), plus garlic mustard.
- Took down a small dead tree that seemed hazardous, and moved a downed tree blocking a path.
- Planted 4 trees (from the give-away).
- Uncovered what I assume are the front steps of the Thomas house: will be one of the spots where we'll put in the native perennials as groundcover (generously paid for by the EAC).

Hallowell Park:

- Cleared a lot of porcelainberry vines and wineberry shrubs from along the stream by the volleyball field (opposite side from volleyball court), in preparation for live-staking on coming weekend.
- Cleared English ivy and bittersweet vines from the stream along the parking lot (other side of bridge).
- Removed a bunch of trash from the stream (by volleyball court).
- Took the fence & stake from a small dead tree to protect a small maple (silver?) that seems to have volunteered itself streamside.
- Note: There are a couple very large mulberry trees on both stream reaches – given that the native red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) is becoming rare (& hybridizing with the invasive *M. alba*), I wonder if these older trees could be the native *M. rubra* – needs to be checked.