

Notes From STC meeting of July 2024

09 Jul 2024

Attendees: Commissioners Joe Ascenzi, Patricia Gallagher, John Kennedy, Anna Nicholaides; Assoc. Members Andrew Christy, Robin Eisman; Township representative: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer; Guests as noted below.

Called to order by Co-Chair Gallagher at 7:30 pm; adjourned ~9:15 pm.

Agenda items:

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

(2) Redeemer Valley Farm

Rachel Razzi of Redeemer Valley Farm (a 26-acre project of Sisters of the Holy Redeemer) spoke about plans for tree planting at the farm and requested help from the STC in the form of expertise and working with Girl Scout troops who will be volunteering for tree planting there. Joe A. and John K. volunteered to visit the site.

(3) 2025 Budget Proposal [Trish G., all]

Major changes from previous year's proposed budget are:

- Township-wide invasives management plan was added: ≤ \$20K. (NB: Andrew C. met with someone from Natural Lands Trust to discuss developing such a plan.)
- Follow-up maintenance of newly-planted trees was added, to include professional services and supplies: \$18K.
- Funding for a project utilizing the PA DCNR Outdoor Corps was added, to include trees, plants, supplies and services: \$4.1K.

(4) Consulting Arborist

- Joe A., John K., & Trish G. evaluated bids received and recommended one of them to the township for Commissioners' approval.
- Bids and contract are applicable for 1 year.

(5) Meeting w/Jessica Tholey

- Jun 13 meeting was attended by Jessica Tholey (new Parks & Rec dept. head) and Trish G. and John K., STC co-chairs.
- The meeting was positive and productive; topics included the Township's capacity to maintain healthy trees, the MTAP (Master Tree Action Plan), and ways for the STC and Parks & Rec to collaborate. Regular meetings are planned for the future.

(6) Upcoming Meeting w/Abington School District

- Anna N. will meet next week with Dr. Fecher (ASD superintendent).
- Several members suggest using Andrew C.'s tree plan for Highland Elementary as an example.
- Discussion ensued about best resources for materials showing benefits of trees for children/schools: suggestions included Last Child in the Woods (Richard Louv), published research on greenery and grades, etc.

(7) PA Outdoors Corps 2025 Application

Applications for 2025 are due this Aug. 02, much earlier than last year's application. Trish G. asked Robin E. to contact Township administrators w/heads-up to ensure on-time submission. It was agreed that the project would entail primarily invasives removal and also tree planting, with specific sites to be chosen later.

(8) Other Business: Resident Input

- Lora Lehman raised two issues: (a) Wanting to see an invasives management plan being implemented now (see notes above); (b) Disagreeing w/the Greater Glenside Civic Assoc. having been allowed, during the spring 2024 tree give-away, to get early access to requesting trees, given that there are more disadvantaged communities in the Township with less canopy coverage. Trish G. noted that the MTAP acknowledges and seeks to address this inequity, and that past tree give-aways have involved outreach specifically to those communities with sparser tree canopy. All agreed that more outreach/public education is needed.
- A local resident noted the abundance of invasive plants on a PECO right-of-way near Lorimer Park.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman