

Notes From STC meeting of Aug 2024

13 Aug 2024

Attendees: Commissioners Joe Ascenzi, Robin Eisman, John Kennedy, Anna Nicholaides; Assoc. Members Andrew Christy, Kristin Gaenssle; Township representative: Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer; EAC guest: Cakky Braun-Evans; Other guests noted below.

Called to order by Co-Chair Kennedy at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:25 pm.

Agenda items:

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

(2) New Role: Treasurer

- Andrew C. introduced Kristin Gaenssle as the new treasurer; she has volunteered to administer invoices and check processing as the STC/Township liaison.
- Details of the process were discussed; Trish G. or John K., as co-chairs, must approve any check request before it goes to the Township for processing.

(3) SEPTA Slope Stabilization Project - Rockwell Ave

Several neighbors who own homes along Rockwell Ave where SEPTA plans to stabilize a steep slope brought their concerns about the loss of vegetation to the STC. They noted that 6 houses are affected.

- From their interactions with SEPTA, the plan is apparently to: (a) remove all vegetation from the steep slope above the tracks and replace it with rocks and mesh to hold in the rocks; (b) cut down all trees in neighbors' backyards along the top of the slope and replace them with a single species, Leyland cypress.
- From residents' reports, only one neighbor has signed an agreement with SEPTA so far to perform this work on their property, while SEPTA is pressuring residents to agree.
- It was agreed that Andrew C. will draft a letter to SEPTA in consultation with Joe A. (professional arborist, who voiced concerns about the choice of Leyland cypress).

(4) Fall Tree Give-Away

Andrew C. presented details for the give-away, scheduled Sat., Oct 26 at Crestmont Park, including items that will hopefully make the logistics more organized.

(5) Redeemer Valley Farm Visit

- Joe A. and John K. met w/several people on-site at Redeemer Valley Farm (Huntingdon Valley), which had requested advice on planting trees for shade and stormwater management at their location.
- Joe A. will meet with them again to look at detailed site plans.
- The group discussed possible doing public education / STC outreach at some of their public events.

(6) STC 2025 Budget: was submitted.

(7) Tree Care & Watering of New Trees Over Summer

- Pennbryn Park: John K. reported that he'd been watering, and the new trees are generally in good shape.
- Hallowell Park: Anna N. reported that she and volunteers mulched trees (and tree donuts), and that the local fire department had watered the trees twice this summer.
- Edgehill Woods: Robin E. reported that she'd been watering with several volunteers, but hard to find vols. to carry so many jugs. A few trees/shrubs (of ~40) died, due to drought and/or ??; perennials being watered minimally, doing well except for deer browse.

Anna N. noted that local tree-care companies using volcano mulching; possible approaches discussed.

(8) Consulting Arborist Selection

John K. announced that the Board of Commissioners approved the Consulting Arborist recommended by STC, John Hosbach. He will attend the Sept. STC meeting.

(9) Parks & Rec Programming: Deferred to next meeting

(10) PSU Abington Collaboration Opportunity

- Robin E. had meeting/site visit with Prof. Michelle (Shelly) Grinar of PSU Abington, who recently got a small grant for undergraduate research to benefit local communities. She'd like to establish an arboretum on campus and have STC advice on doing that.
- Re: presentation Robin E. agreed to give to a couple of classes, including info on the STC and possible volunteering, John K. suggested a general presentation that could be modified for various neighborhood/other groups.

(11) Meeting w/Abington School District

- Anna N. met with Dr. Fecher (ASD superintendent) and Steve Curtin (facilities director), reported that the meeting was overall positive.
- ASD agreed to having a row of sycamores planted at the Glenside-Weldon property along Jenkintown Rd.,
- Cakky B-E. of the EAC noted that ASD wants the EAC to be involved, to at least some extent, in plans for the proposed new school building, and that at least some ASD officials are aware of the need for including nature in school environments.

(12) Greater Glenside Civic Association & Possible Tree-Planting Event

Trees planned for old Glenside-Weldon school property would be a good fit for this event.

(13) Fall Bare-Root Planting of PHS Trees

Where to plant the trees was discussed. John K., coordinator for PHS Tree Tenders events, will contact Parks & Rec. Ordering deadline is Sept 10.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eisman