

**Attendees:** Commissioners Trish Gallagher (Chair), Joe Ascenzi, John Kennedy, Anna Nichoaides, Steve Sacavage; Assoc. Members Andrew Christy, Robin Eisman; Township representative Nathan Vasserman, Information Technology Officer.

Meeting called to order by Chair Gallagher at 7:30 pm; adjourned 9:15 pm.

**Agenda items:**

**(1) Recommendations on 1583 Rothley Ave. development proposal:**

- Current draft letter will be updated with a joint letter from the STC and EAC; some discussion on specific species recommendations.
- Discussion on adjacent lots, now empty or being used as community garden; possibility of STC offering to plant trees there depending on ownership.

**(2) Additional opportunities for planting trees with end-of-year funds:**

- Hallowell Park: Anna N. received a proposal from Tree Authority (private nursery) for Hallowell Park to plant 20 trees there for \$4100. One issue w/Hallowell is the porcelain berry vines, which would need control by volunteers until (if) Township has funds to provide for professional management.
- Abington Library: Andrew C. has contacted Library staff about renovation and expansion of the “natives garden” at the library; was agreed that this “demo garden” would provide a good educational opportunity, given its many patrons. Would include removing the 2 Bradford pears (no longer recommended for planting in this area), planting 5-6 native trees, possibly adding native perennials also. Estimates will be obtained.
- Exact amount of funds available TBD.

**(3) MTAP (Master Tree Action Plan) & Related Proposed Ordinance:**

Trish G reported on the outcome of an online meeting, held Oct 27, among STC (herself & J. Ascenzi), EAC (3 members), and Township officials (Township Mgr. Richard Manfredi, Ass't Township Mgr. Ashley McIlvaine, Ass't. to Township Mgr. Terry Castorina, representatives from Code Enforcement, Mike Narcowich of Montgomery County Planning Commission).

- Township officials will look into revisions for those code revisions considered (by those proposing them) the most urgent, with Commissioners ultimately voting on approval; a more comprehensive update will follow in the future.
- The STC ordinance for tree protection was originally drafted as a revision to part of the landscaping code. Relevant parts of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) will also be studied by STC for any revisions needed to protect trees.

**(4) Tree Giveaway Planning (Oct 21, Sat):**

- Lawn signs will be offered to tree recipients at the end of the pickup process. Robin E. to pick up signs from printer next week.
- All 400 trees were reserved as of several days ago.
- 35 volunteers (plenty) have signed up for the event; many recipients signed up to volunteer w/STC in the future.

**(5) Tree Projects in Township Parks/Other Open Spaces**

- For Crosswicks & EdgeHill Woods, trees will arrive as part of Oct.21 delivery (air-pruning pots)
- Baederwood & Coates will be getting a large number of small shrubs for planting.

**(6) Fall PHS Bare-root Tree Planting**

- John K. coordinating w/Parks director Karl Lukens on planting of 29 trees at Penbryn Park.
- Trees to be picked up Nov. 14-17, planted Nov 18-19, w/Kathy Hemsley helping to lead planting.

**(7) 'Tree City USA' Recertification**

- Annual recertification materials due end of January. Trish G. has always worked on this. Steve S, Anna N volunteer to learn the process.

**(8) Abington School District Connections**

- Neither Anna N nor Steve S received response from ASD re: inquiries about Highland Elem.
- A Copper Beech parent [correct?] wrote to the STC to request shade trees at Copper Beech Elem.
- Discussion on how to best engage w/ASD, other parties to increase tree cover, improve tree maintenance at schools.

**(9) Volunteer Database/Communications**

Robin E. has been in touch w/Briar Bush director about software: they have not been using it due to lack of capacity. [F/U notes: STC was given enhanced user status, Robin E will look into setting up additional capabilities and manually upload current listings into Volgistics software.]

**(10) Possible 'Heritage Tree' in Keswick Village**

- Request for use of Township drone by Trish G. hasn't received response.
- Steve S. in touch w/ Pennsylvania Champion Tree Program (PA Big Trees) but they haven't sent anyone to measure it. STC may just measure the tree itself, send height, diameter to the Pennsylvania Champion Tree Program.

**(11) Social Media & Upcoming Email Newsletter**

- STC files need to be migrated to a single online drive; access is now confusing and spotty.
- Subjects for future newsletters: facts/myths on planting large trees; info about leaving snags.

**Ongoing business**

Ongoing maintenance and budget: the STC has included funds to hire professional arborist/tree care services in the coming year's budget. [Funding will be decided by Commissioners.]

Volunteer efforts:

- STC is discussing with Parks head Karl Lukens the possibility of having "official" volunteers who would receive training and be vetted by the STC to perform tree planting and invasives removal on their own, under the direction of the STC. Steve S. has investigated the possibility of getting a staff person at PERT (Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust), who runs a similar program there, to advise us on setup.
- John K. will attend a local PHS (PA Horticultural Society) "Tree Tender" meeting to talk about the Abington STC, hopefully recruit more volunteers.