

Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2024 meeting held at 7:30pm via Zoom

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88471197246?pwd=YStocDZaMWNXb1hvV0tQczR3TURWZz09>

Attendees: Kate Fullerton (Chair)
Gabe Rosko
Cecile Vidican
Hoyt Holly
Moe Fabian

Open Public Meeting Statement: Kate Fullerton read the Open Public Meeting Statement.

Approval of June 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes: Gabe Rosko moved to approve and Cecile Vidican seconded.

o **Council update:** none for today.

o **Arboretum Update** (Gabe Rosko): the second enclosure area has been created, and the fencing installed (Moe Fabian). The next step is to find appropriate plantings to go into these enclosures. There are fewer trees in the enclosures, and more shrubs and native plants. Trees are not as affected by the deer population.

o **Pruning of Trees** (Moe Fabian): there was pruning on West Welling, between Burd Street and Sked Street (raising up the canopy over the sidewalk). This was a light summer compared to past ones.

o **Budget:** We need to review the budget for next year. Usually it's similar amounts, but with all these tree removals, we may need more. (Kate) We're supposed to follow the "zero canopy loss" guidelines, but we've taken down many trees, so council should think about budgeting for tree plantings, especially considering the new ordinance. They're just looking for towns to make a good faith effort. We communicate well with Mercer County. (Moe)

o There's also \$7000 left in the pruning and take-down budget. We have 3 stumps to be ground, 1 Oak to be pruned, and 2 more trees to be taken down. Moe has also been in touch with Brian McDonald regarding the 2018-2021 Tree Planting Grant: they're focused on the Community Forestry Management Plans, so nothing is available in the spring, so there's no grant form to be filled out for spring. There's one more memorial tree request for a Dogwood, with an engraved stone. The supplier doesn't have a Dogwood right now, but the person requesting it said it's ok to do it in the spring.

o There were originally 80 trees still on the chopping block, we're now down to about 65, with many Pin Oaks to come down in the next 2-3 years. We may have an unfortunate mass extinction

event soon, so we need to budget for that. (Gabe) Should we ask for maintenance grants from Brian McDonald? (Moe)

- o **Tree Plantings** (Gabe Rosko and Moe Fabian pre-report): there are \$800 left in the budget. At 413 Burd Street there was a request for a Paper Bark Maple. We lost a big Beech Tree at Kunkel Park, and an Oak at Sked Park. Moe is looking for a Pecan or a Hickory for Kunkel, and a different species of Oak for Sked Park, to repopulate the two parks. The cost of these 3 trees will finish up the planting balance for 2024. There will be more requests for the spring.

- o **New planting spots:** everyone should investigate new spots in the next few months and discuss with Moe. Moe has a file he maintains. When he does pruning, he takes note of potential planting locations. East Welling and Burd Street are pretty much filled because of street projects. Upper Sked may have a couple more spots. Mercer county needs to diversify, they plant too many Kwanzan Cherries.

- o **County plantings:** ask about Main Street.

- o **Newsletter additions** (Kate Fullerton): continue with tree care tips in the newsletter.

- o **Continuing Education Credits:** (Moe) The tree conference this year is in Atlantic City. There are also online opportunities to get credits. You can get emails from the Shade Tree Federation. We need to know who is CORE trained, and who has certification. Let's make sure we have at least some members who are CORE trained. We need the Continuing Education credits for volunteers through conferences. We can go to Master Gardeners, or use people in the borough who are Master Gardeners for credits.

- o **Community Forestry Plan (2026-2035)** (Kate Fullerton): We will meet in person on October 8 at Borough Hall in the Council Chambers. Next year we can also meet in person a few times (in January, February and March, weather permitting). There's lots of overlap with the previous plan, but some things need to be moved around. We'll divide into groups of two. We'll make those groups at the October meeting. Kate will float in all sections as she is the Chair. The Borough IT system will not let us have a shared drive, so we will have to find a different way to work on the CFMP.

- o **Plan due** in December 2025. We'll aim to submit by April 2025.

- o Kate sent the old plan and the guidelines for the next plan to Committee members.

Next Meeting: October 8, 2024.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Cecile Vidican.