

**Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee**  
**Meeting of February 16, 2022 7:00 pm**  
**Via Zoom, Meeting ID:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83779791244?pwd=bDkwNGtXQUJJL2hVS0wzQTB5YS9BZz09>

**Minutes**

**Present:** Mayor Davy, Suzen Witcher, Todd McDonald, Cecil Vidican, Kate Dunham, Mike Rheinhardt, Gabe Rosko, Nadine Stern, Morris Fabian, Rick Smith, Carrie Sargeant, Stewart Warren, Kyle Wood, and Kate Fullerton (7:30).

**Open Public Meeting Statement** was read and the meeting was opened.

Guest Presenter:

Mayor Davy introduced Ms. Sargeant from the NJ DEP Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program. She reviewed the roles and responsibilities of Shade Tree Committees and members and the work of the Urban and Community Forestry Program.

**Reorganization**

Mayor Davy asked for nominations for a Chair. Mayor Davy made a motion nominating Ms. Witcher as Chair. All in favor. Mayor Davy asked for nominations for a Secretary. Mr. Rosko made a motion nominating Ms. Fullerton as Secretary and Mr. Rheinhardt seconded the motion. All in favor. The Committee members confirmed that the first Tuesday of each month would be the meeting date.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the October 5, 2021 meeting were tabled to the March 1, 2022 meeting.

**Business**

Mayor Davy requested a review of the work of the Committee for the past year. As the prior year's Secretary, Ms. Fullerton offered to review actions of the Committee for the past year. Ms. Fullerton started with the Borough Tree Inventory, explaining the approximately 22-year history of the inventory and the process for keeping the inventory updated. The Pennington Public Works Department is responsible for storing the digital version of this inventory, while Committee Members assist in updating the inventory, along with any work done by the Public Works Department.

Ms. Fullerton then mentioned the Committee's work on creating a trifold brochure and book marks to be given out to residents as an educational program. Mr. Rheinhardt has been instrumental in coordinating this effort.

There was also a reference to the Pennington Borough Arboretum. Mayor Davy announced that the property behind Toll Gate Grammar School has been transferred to the Borough, so the project can move forward.

It was noted that a large project that the Committee undertakes annually is the Arbor Day Celebration on the last Friday of April each year. It is traditionally held in conjunction with the First Grade class at Toll Gate. The Borough purchases a tree to plant and teaches the students how to plant a healthy tree. The

Committee works with the Toll Gate teachers to coordinate the time and location for each Arbor Day Celebration. Traditionally, the Mayor reads a Proclamation.

Mr. Smith reviewed the State grant for tree planting and tree planting locations. The Borough tries to find optimal locations for tree plantings during road projects, when the road and curb is being reconstructed. New trees can get a strong start to growing. This also allows the Borough to limit areas that are not optimal for trees.

Mr. Fabian reviewed the current nursery stock. There is a shortage of trees right now due to a variety of reasons, not just the supply chain and pandemic. We will need to accept the trees we can get right now. It was noted that the Borough has planted 80 trees over the past few years, despite the sidewalk and power line restrictions. Mr. Rosko explained that the Borough has difficulty planting trees due to the limited distance between the road and the sidewalk. There is a product called structured soil that can be used underneath roads and sidewalks that helps prevent tree roots from lifting sidewalks, but it is expensive. The Shade Tree Committee and Public Works Department have advocated "Right Tree, Right Location" for the past few years, in order to optimize the tree planting locations within the Borough. Approximately 6 years ago, Mr. Rosko identified 80 at-risk trees that need to be removed. Almost half of these trees have been removed. These trees are identified on the Tree Inventory. It was noted that the tree stock at the nursery is healthy, despite being limited. It was also noted that the Committee had begun discussing planting key trees in key locations, or trying to support healthy trees in key locations within the Borough. These trees make significant contributions to the Borough and are well known by residents.

There was a public comment regarding a London Planetree and Sycamore tree at 41 East Welling and the proposed sidewalk design. The Arborist for the property owner has a plan to preserve the roots of both trees. It was recommended that the plan be shared with Mr. Smith so they could be reviewed by staff.

The next meeting of the Shade Tree Committee will be March 1, 2022 at 7:30pm.

The meeting adjourned.