

Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee

Meeting of March 1, 2022 7:30 pm

Via Zoom, Meeting ID:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83285263093?pwd=VTYwMzZ3cEM3ZDNlczcxcckJHTUkJUT09>

Minutes

Present: Suzen Witcher, Todd McDonald, Cecil Vidican, Kate Dunham, Mike Rheinhardt, Gabe Rosko, Nadine Stern, Morris Fabian, Rick Smith, and Kate Fullerton. Members of the Public Present: Adria Pollioni, Ashley Balbuena, Susan Parris, and Kate Correa.

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

Approval of Minutes: Mike Rheinhardt made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2021 meeting. Gabe Rosco seconded. Kate Dunham and Kate Fullerton were the only other members in attendance at that meeting and approved the minutes. Mike Rheinhardt made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2022 meeting and Kate Dunham seconded. All in favor.

Old Business

Mr. Rheinhardt provided an update on the brochure/bookmark project. He stated that at the October meeting the Committee chose to focus on education by using bookmarks, rather than a trifold brochure. The brochure was getting wordy and overwhelming. Mr. Smith had suggested a bookmark with succinct information. There will be four topics for bookmarks: What Bugs a Tree, How to Plant a Tree, Right Tree, Right Place, and the Benefit of Trees. There was a question about having the Borough website on the bookmark and Mr. Rheinhardt stated that a QR code would be used to like the bookmark to more information at the Borough website. The Committee supported having a design begun at Zo Graphics. The design and production cost was already included in the 2022 budget request for the Shade Tree Committee. It was suggested that of the four, How to Plant a Tree is the most important, and could be a good starting point. The Committee discussed options for the bookmark design, but decided to see what Zo Graphics would produce.

Mr. Smith reported on the Annual Accomplishment Report. The Tree City USA report is being finalized. Among the highlights for 2021: 24 trees were planted, 47 trees were removed, and 30 trees were pruned. There was a quick discussion to confirm that the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program had received a copy of the report so the Borough is in good standing for our grants. Mr. Smith continued with a Status Report on the 20 trees funded by the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program. This is a basic grant for State funds to plant 20 trees. The State would give the Borough \$10,000 and the Borough is responsible for matching this grant with \$2,500. The match would be made through employee salaries for planting the trees. Mr. Smith is completing the paperwork for this Status Report to the State.

Mr. Fabian provided his report on Tree Trimming and Removal. Two contracts went out to bid for tree removal. Tom's Tree Service removed 5 trees by the senior center and HTS removed a few trees around town: 3 hazardous Maple trees on Van Noy, 3 Ashes and 1 Maple by Borough Hall, and various other small jobs around town. Mr. Fabian described how HTS used a new tool to remove the difficult trees at Borough Hall more quickly and safely. The Pennington Department of Public Works removed a Maple tree on Curlis Avenue.

New Business

Preparations for Arbor Day were discussed. Mr. Fabian reported that he already has 45 tree cookies. He has prepared a Kwanzan Cherry tree to be planted on the island in front of the school this will be the last Kwanzan Cherry until an existing tree needs to be removed.

It was noted that a press release is needed for Arbor Day. Ms. Vidican offered to write up the press release. Ms. Fullerton offered to contact Mary Galiato at MercerMe regarding the press release. Ms. Witcher offered her support, as needed. Mr. McDonald offered to contact Ms. Drewes and Mrs. Lennon to finalize the details with the school. It was noted that the teachers will need to confirm which children are allowed to be photographed for any pictures. It was also noted that an older picture could be used for Facebook promotions.

Mr. Rheinhardt reported on the request to purchase and distribute seedlings at either Arbor Day or Pennington Day. Pennington Day is the preferred day for giving out trees, but the supply from the State was so low this year that by the time we responded, they were sold out. It was expressed that the success of the tree give-away last year was so successful since it was personal.

Pennington Day Preparations were quickly discussed. Mr. Rheinhardt offered to register the Shade Tree Committee for a booth. It was agreed that we would arrange for the booth schedule at a later meeting.

Ms. Stern provided a Council Update regarding the East Welling Road project. There was a large discussion during Council Sessions. Mr. Rosko and Mr. Smith were referenced during this discussion. Due to standards and regulation for the scope of work for the project and regarding grant funding for the road project, certain trees will need to be removed. A review of each tree will be made to determine if trees can be kept or need to be removed.

Under other business, Mr. Smith announced that CORE training is still available this spring via the internet. Mr. Rheinhardt, Ms. Stern, Ms. Witcher, Ms. Vidican, and Mr. McDonald will be taking the course.

It was also noted that the Mayor has a goal of planting three trees for each tree taken down in the Borough. This may be challenging with the limited locations in the Borough. Committee members were requested to review locations for potential tree planting locations. Mr. Smith also offered to take a walk with the Committee when it is warm to review tree planting locations.

There was a public comment regarding the East Welling Road project. Susan Parris stated that if the sidewalk is built as proposed, the roots of two of her trees would be cut. She and her husband have hired professionals that have determined an alternate location for the sidewalk that would preserve the trees. Mr. Smith expressed concern regarding the NJDOT specifications for road construction, but he would appreciate having Ms. Parris submit the plans from her professionals so he can review them, per the goal to preserve as many trees as they can.

The next meeting of the Shade Tree Committee will be April 5, 2022 at 7:30pm.

The meeting adjourned.