

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission**  
**Minutes of April 27, 2021**  
**Virtual meeting, Zoom conference**

**Members**

**Voting:**

Sharon Ainsworth

Victoria Airgood

Patricia Frawley

Lily Krauss

Alexandra Radbil

Janet Stern

**Non-Voting:**

Sandra Chen: 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate

Ray Devoe: 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate

**Council Liaison:**

Michelle Lambros

**Town Arborist:**

Taylor Sapudar

**Guest:** E. Brady

The regular meeting of the PSTC was called to order at 5:01 pm on 4/27/2021 by Ainsworth.

**OPENING STATEMENT:** Read by Ainsworth.

**ROLL CALL:** Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Chen, Ainsworth, Krauss, Lambros, Sapudar.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

Ainsworth read a note from Bernie Miller thanking everyone for the tree and plaque in his honor.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the March 23, 2021, meeting were approved with corrections by a motion made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Krauss, Ainsworth.

**Motion carried.**

(Devoe entered the meeting at 5:07 pm.)

## **REPORTS**

### **1. Arborist Report**

- Sapудар reviewed the spring planting project, which included ~74 trees planted by Sunset Creations.
  - The NJ American Water grant was not awarded to Princeton.
- The ash injection contract was sent out; bids are due on May 10, 2021. Five local contractors with a valid pesticide license were sent, for bid, the contract for injecting 44 trees.
- The Elm Road walking path has seen much activity. Justin's Tree Service removed the larger ash trees that showed EAB damage. DPW removed smaller ash trees and understory debris. The volume of stumps will be removed in house. Engineering has finished paving the path, so the STC subcommittee on landscaping the path should be scheduled to meet soon.
- The Witherspoon St. redesign meeting will be held May 18; discussion will include green infrastructure.
- The holiday trees have been planted by the tree crew, most of them in Smoyer Park, Green Meadows, and Community Park to replace other evergreens which were lost, and to serve as screening.
- The Davey Inventory contract is with the municipal attorney for review before being sent out to bid.
- Sapудар has contacted the State in regard to the CSIP contract, which requires inspection by the DEP of the 61 trees. The DEP forester and Sapудар will meet on site to assess tree health. If all trees are in good health, by spring 2022 the municipality will receive 30K from the State.
- Sapудар wants to include an article on ivy- impacted trees on the website. Frawley offered to help.
- Radbil asked about the RFP-posted bid and attorney review.
- Stern asked if the DPW phone number had changed. Sapудар said both numbers work.

### **2. Council Liaison Report**

- Lambros is seeking from the municipality specifications for plaques. Radbil asked if there is a central repository for plaque information so that information is uniformly accessible.
- There are many projects being considered by Council focusing on affordable housing. The STC can give input on the Franklin Ave. plantings, which are in the process of being put together.
- The rain garden for the fueling station has to wait until the brick wall is built, but a generator needs to be installed before that. Sapудар has been in contact with the Watershed Institute, but all awaits construction of the brick wall.
- Lambros thanked Sapудар for planting the evergreens and said that many look forward to next year's holiday tree project.

## OLD BUSINESS

### 1. **Commemorative Tree Program (Radbil)**

-Radbil presented an overview of the three documents, with notations of several corrections made by members. The Public Arts Committee has not yet given directions for mounting the plaques. Ainsworth asked whether we needed to wait for the committee to finalize plaque design; the current plaque design is viewed as the final response. Lambros will send the current documents to the new administrator for review, in addition to ensuring that links work as noted.

Lambros questioned whether donors should contact the vendor themselves or if the process should be completed by municipal staff. Radbil justified the former approach. Lambros will try to finalize and standardize the plaque process. Ainsworth suggested that notification of Public donations should be at the discretion of the donors.

-Lambros asked about locations for planting; as noted in the document, the donors will work with the arborist to decide on tree placement.

-Radbil suggested that the donation from the family that is giving a grove of trees could be an opportunity to see if the forms work. There are two others who have reached out to Sapudar to plant trees, so there are three donors so far.

-Stern questioned the process of sending in the check prior to “approval” of the donation. Stern offered to adjust the current wording to clarify that it is just the details that would need approval, not the donation itself. Stern and Radbil will finalize wording on all three documents prior to submission to Lambros.

-Further changes to the Princeton Shade Tree Trust Reserve document were reviewed.

-The Thank You letters were reviewed as a final step in this process. The question of whether to include a contact link as an email response was discussed, with the resolution that a generic email would be provided.

-Documents will be finalized and sent to Lambros for action.

-Stern questioned whether we should encompass the “Adopt an Ash Tree” fund with the two other funds on the website. The three ways to donate should be clustered under one heading.

**Motion:** To approve with corrections the documents related to the Commemorative Tree and PSTTR donations, made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Radbil, Stern, Ainsworth, Krauss, Frawley.

**Motion carried.**

### 2. **Follow Up--Sustainable Landscaping Expo/Saturday, April 24 (Stern/Chen/Devoe)**

Ainsworth noted that *Town Topics* had three items related to the STC in its current issue.

-Stern reported that red maple seedlings were given out at this event, in addition to mulch volcano door hangers. All materials were well received. Stern described this as a perfect outreach opportunity. Sapudar was thanked for picking up the seedlings and Ainsworth for packaging the seedlings, which made distribution easy. Pineland's Nursery was the source of the seedlings. Their focus is on all-native plant materials. Chen suggested that we put on our website suppliers of native trees and shrubs. Radbil noted that Pat Sutton has a list and great resources for native plant material. Thanks to Stern, Chen, and Devoe.

**3. Review of Proposed Forest Stewardship Legislation A4843, A4844, A4845 (Chen/Airgood)**

Chen reviewed the proposed STC comments on three bills pending in the State legislature. She noted that both Ainsworth and Airgood contributed substantially to development of the comments.

-The first bill pertains to forest stewardship plans for public lands. The third section would require municipalities to develop and carry out forest stewardship plans for any forest lands, 25 acres or larger, to be acquired-with the aid of State funding. The fourth section would lower the weight given a municipality's funding applications unless it manages the forest lands it already owns under a forest stewardship plan. Chen commented that it is costly to develop and implement such plans. How would municipalities be able to afford these costs? These two sections would discourage municipal land preservation. Current law makes managing under a forest stewardship plan a voluntary option for private landowners. It should also be voluntary for municipalities. The State owns a third of the State's forest land, and even the State does not have the resources needed. Forest stewardship plans are prepared jointly by the landowner and a forester with expertise in forest management. The number of qualified foresters is limited. If municipalities find they need to hire foresters to help prepare plans, there would be a shortage. Rutgers, state colleges, and the EPA should be charged with such training. Finally, applications for land acquisition should be based on the merits of the application.

-The second bill pertains to forest stewardship plans for private lands. Chen explained that, once a plan is approved by the State, a municipality cannot prevent the private landowner from carrying out any tree removal or other practice allowed under the plan. Currently a municipality may pass an ordinance that requires a private landowner to obtain municipal approval of a plan, prior to submitting it to the State. This second bill would take away municipalities' right to pass such an ordinance. In Princeton there are 400 privately held acres that are managed under such plans. The STC has never taken up this issue. The proposed comment is that the right of a municipality to pass such an ordinance should not be removed.

-The third bill deals with prescribed burns. In some cases this may be the most appropriate land management method available, but the decision to carry out prescribing should be made on a case-by- case basis. The third bill could result in a municipality being pressured to employ prescribed burning when it is not the best approach.

These are the recommendations that the work group is suggesting. Krauss asked about the concept of “burns” and whether there should be uniform procedures or let municipalities deal with the issue. Ainsworth brought up the concept of costs for implementing much of the legislation. Krauss indicated that there should be more education about forest management and related practices such as controlled burns. Chen clarified the issue, indicating that the State closely regulates how and when prescribed burns are carried out, and that any municipality that decided to carry out controlled burns would have to do so in accordance with the State process.

(Lambros left the meeting at 6:25 pm.)

Ainsworth summarized the bills and the lack of resources, which would hamper the implementation of forest management plans. Krauss asked for clarification on the STC role in regard to these bills vis-à-vis the STC’s comments and the Town Council. Ainsworth recommended that we approve this document and submit it to the mayor and the Princeton Environmental Commission.

**Motion:** That the above document be submitted to the mayor, made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Radbil, Ainsworth, Krauss, Stern, Frawley.

**Motion carried.**

**4. STC Statutory Authority (Airgood/Chen)**

Tabled until Airgood is present. Chen noted that under this authority the STC has oversight over sidewalk repair where work is harming tree roots. We should address this when #4 is discussed. Ainsworth asked Sapudar if he had concern or authority in this area.

**5. Environmental Justice and the Urban Forest in Princeton (Radbil/Stern)**

Radbil indicated that she and Stern are meeting with PCH members for a tour of P CV. Stern noted that she volunteered with a program, under a grant from FOPOS, that sponsored a hike through Mountain Lakes with 37 people of color participating. One group from a nearby town so enjoyed the hike that the group will come back to volunteer at Mountain Lakes to help with reforestation.

**6. ISPs for STC Members’ Email Addresses (Devoe)**

Will get information out soon.

**7. Tree City Webinar Review (Radbil)**

-Radbil reviewed the webinars for training.

In both events, education was a large focus, including the planting of trees, oversight of trees, and involving the community in caring for trees, which would

lower costs of upkeep. Training programs were demonstrated and fundraising was also reviewed, as was involving the business community in care and funding.

- The use of data and inventories in relation to storm water management was reviewed.
  - Data is also used for budgeting, identifying maturing trees, and assessing the impact of and planning for the planting new trees.
  - One commission had a sick tree day. People signed up to have trees diagnosed by a mix of volunteers. Great outreach and education.
  - Sapudar agreed with the concept described by Radbil of revising the 5 percent rule to achieve a varied tree planting.

a. **Core Training Notes (Radbil).** Included in notes for Item #7.

**Adjournment**

**Motion** to adjourn made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Stern, Frawley, Radbil, Ainsworth, Krauss.

**Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm.**

**ADDENDUM: ACTION PLAN**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DUE DATE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Follow-up with Town for ISP for STC Members' Email Addresses	May STC meeting	Devoe/Ainsworth
STC Statutory Authority	May STC Meeting	Chen/Airgood
Making Contact with Green Streets	Future meeting	Chen
Environmental Justice, Minority Involvement, and PCV Project	May STC meeting	Radbil/ Stern/Chen
Donation Fund : Documents to be sent to New administrator and plaque process to be Standardized and finalized	May STC Meeting	Lambros
Johnson Park Walking Path Project	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/ Krauss/Airgood

Items/Content to Be Reviewed for Addition to or Removal from Website	Ongoing	Sapudar/Radbil/ Frawley
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