

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission  
January 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes  
5:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting/Zoom Conference**

**Members (Voting):**

Sharon Ainsworth, Chair  
Lily Krauss, Vice Chair  
Victoria Airgood  
Sandra Chen  
Raymond DeVoe  
Patricia Frawley  
Janet Stern

**Non-Voting:**

Radhika Pola – First Alternate (arrived 5:27 p.m.)

**Council Liaison:** Mayor Mark Freda

**Arborist:** Taylor Sapudar

**Guests:** C. Taylor (Princeton Open Space Manager)

**Public:** L. Green; J. Atkins; W. Atkins

**CALL TO ORDER:** the January 2023 meeting of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission (STC) was called to order by Ainsworth at 5:00 .m. on January 24, 2023.

**OPENING STATEMENT:** read by Ainsworth

**ROLL CALL:** Krauss, Frawley, Sapudar, Stern, Freda, Devoe, Ainsworth, Chen

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** W. Atkins wants the notification system improved and indicated that the STC should get updates on tree removal more frequently. W. Atkins remains concerned that tree removal criteria are not being observed. He asked about the status of the proposed changes to the Ordinance notification process.

J. Atkins noted that since the neighboring tree canopy coverage was reduced, there has been a huge increase in energy usage cost. She also commented on the lack of tree coverage in the Jackson Witherspoon area.

**MINUTES:** Since the December meeting was canceled due to technical difficulties, there are no Minutes to review.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ainsworth stated that there are no December minutes to review since technical issues prevented the STC Dec. 20, 2022, meeting from being held as had been publicly noticed. She further stated her intent to publicly announce at the December meeting that member Pat Frawley had agreed to serve as the nominating committee for the annual STC reorganization. Frawley completed the

nomination process and will conduct the reorganization proceedings as publicly noticed on this month's agenda.

There were two other outstanding issues on the December agenda as reported by Ainsworth; the 2023 meeting schedule (via Zoom or Witherspoon Building) and the proposed changes to the notification process for private tree removals. The 2023 meeting dates and location are on today's agenda for discussion and STC action. Ainsworth has been informed that the town staff review on how the proposed notification process could be implemented has been completed. The expectation is that the proposed changes to the Tree and Shrub Ordinance will be on the February STC agenda.

Ainsworth then asked that prior to the arborist report, Cindy Taylor, town Open Space Manager, be given the opportunity to report on the town's reforestation grant award from the Greenhouse Gas Initiative. C. Taylor outlined the process by which the G.G.I. Award was obtained. Staff effort and ingenuity resulted in Princeton receiving the more than \$500K award for the reforestation of Community Park North with the use of native trees and removal of invasive species.

## **REPORTS**

### **1. Arborist Report**

- The infographic for February will focus on mature tree maintenance. The March issue will be about the importance of species diversity. Suggestions for new topics are always welcome.
- January's Tree of the Month is the American Holly. February will feature the Eastern Red Cedar. March will feature the White Oak with research done by Chen. The Municipal website contains all the Tree of the Month completed to date if anyone is interested.
- The Municipal Street Tree Inventory was begun on Nov 7<sup>th</sup> with 19K street trees to be surveyed in addition to specimen trees in local parks. Davey has inventoried 14,297 trees so far with work to be completed by mid-March. More park trees will be inventoried than originally scheduled.
- Once the inventory is completed and the resiliency grant is closed out, Princeton will be able to apply for other DEP grants including the CSIP.
- The Street Tree contract will be posted in mid-February. Please let Sapudar know of any block areas where residents may be interested in block plantings.
- The municipal arborist routed all three-inch trees planted within the last four years. On wet/cold/windy days, crews have been performing new tree maintenance including scraping root flares, removing any remaining tags and stakes, and elevating structural pruning.
- Sapudar would like the STC to consider tagging municipal trees in the ROW with botanical tags that would include common name, species, family, and a QR code that would direct the viewer to the STC website where the Tree of the Month would furnish further relevant information. The Municipality has a vendor that can do these tags for \$15 per tag. The Municipal Arborist would install the tags which could link to the inventory or the Tree of the Month.
- The Community Forestry Management annual report is due on 2/15/23.
- The Tree City USA application has been started and is due on 2/15/23.
- Three hundred seedlings have been ordered for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for Arbor Day.
- Five hundred seedlings have been ordered for Porchfest distribution.
- At present, there are no pending grant applications.

-Ash injection contract was posted in February with work to be done on Vandeventer, Mercer Street, Harrison Street Park, and Marquand Park.

## **PLANNING BOARD/ZONING REVIEW**

### **Planning Board Review**

**725 Herrontown Road and 823 Mt. Lucas Rd; Block 1001; Lots 1,2,14**

**Lanvin Development Corporation**

**Preliminary/Final Subdivision and Site Plan Approval with Extended Vesting**

Krauss has reviewed plans for this project and cited several omissions in the plan. She recommended that the plan not be approved as presented.

## **NEW BUSINESS-**

### **1. Arts Council Porchfest and Seedling Order-(Ainsworth/Sapudar)**

Ainsworth reported that due to the need to act quickly, she submitted a request to the Town Clerk for use of Hinds Plaza on Saturday, April 29 from noon-6:00 p.m. She had first contacted the Princeton Arts Council and confirmed that the annual Porchfest community event will be held on that date and that the Plaza will not be a music venue. She conferred with Sapudar and he placed an order for 500 tree seedlings for public distribution at the event. NJDEP Forestry warned that the demand is high so timely action was required. Sapudar has also ordered 300 white pine seedlings for the third grade Arbor Day events. Ainsworth also stated she has made preliminary outreach to the Mercer County Master Gardeners organization and to the Princeton Environmental Commission in an effort to recruit more volunteers to assist with the April 29 event. Sapudar suggested it would be useful to the state forestry program if we could get photos of trees that were successfully established from our prior tree seedling distributions. Chen noted the public interest in smaller trees, like redbuds, at these distributions. She offered to research if there is a source for such trees as the state program does not guarantee the tree species.

## **REORGANIZATION - (Frawley)**

### **1. Election of Chairperson**

**Motion:** Having sent queries and received responses from all current members of the STC, Frawley moved that Ainsworth be elected Chair of the STC for the year 2023. The motion was seconded.

**Ayes:** Chen, Devoe, Frawley, Krauss, Stern, Ainsworth

**Motion carried.**

### **2. Election of Vice Chairperson**

**Motion:** Having sent queries and received responses from all current members of the STC, Frawley moved that Krauss be elected Vice Chair of the STC for the year 2023. The motion was seconded.

**Ayes:** Chen, Devoe, Frawley, Krauss, Stern, Ainsworth

**Motion carried.**

### **3. Designation of Secretary**

**Motion:** by Frawley and seconded that J. Most be designated as Secretary of the STC for the year 2023.

**Ayes:** Chen, Devoe, Frawley, Krauss, Stern, Ainsworth  
**Motion carried.**

#### **4. Review of 2023 Member List**

Review completed.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **1. Sunshine 2023 Adoption**

The members approved the dates and time as publicly noticed on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

##### **2. Hybrid/Zoom/In-Person Meetings - (Ainsworth)**

Ainsworth led the discussion on the issue of Hybrid/Zoom/In-Person Meetings. Ainsworth reported that Janice Most stated that if the STC chose to change mid-year from Zoom, for example, to In-Person that such a change could occur with adequate public notice. Member Airgood, who was unable to attend the meeting, asked that the record reflect her interest in staying with the Zoom format. After discussion, the members agreed to retain Zoom meetings but to revisit the matter at the April meeting.

##### **3. New Jersey Task Force Final Report-(Chen)**

Chen reported that meetings of Senator Smith's Task Force on Management of Public Forests completed their meetings in December and that preparation of a final report was underway. She requested approval of the Task Force's Conceptual Framework.

**Motion** by Krauss that the STC accept the report of the Task Force

**Ayes:** Chen, Devoe, Ainsworth, Krauss, Frawley, Stern.

**Motion Carried.**

Devoe thanked Chen once again for all of her efforts.

##### **4. Invasive Species Legislation-(Chen)**

Chen reported that the concept of banning the sale of invasive exotic species had been strongly endorsed by the Task Force and that a workgroup had been formed by the Task Force to pursue this. They learned in December that the State Senate's Committee on Energy and the Environment, chaired by Senator Smith, was procedurally moving forward S2186, a bill that would ban the sale of a list of invasives. The Task Force workgroup was pleased to learn this but quickly organized themselves to promote a list of amendments to the pending bill. Senate staff are currently studying the proposed amendments. S2186 was passed by the committee with some amendments and bipartisan support.

##### **5. QR Codes: (Ainsworth/Sapudar)**

Ainsworth reminded members that the STC has previously discussed the idea of tagging certain public trees with signage that includes the species, common name, and a QR code. Sapudar has researched the use of QR codes on public trees. He has identified a potential vendor; for 80-100 trees it would cost about \$15 per tag. Each tag would differ based on tree species. A key issue is the QR link to a data source. It was agreed that the QR code is worth pursuing but more information is needed. Sapudar agreed to contact Marquand Park staff to learn more about how

their QR code identification system works and whether data is available on how many members of the public are accessing the information.

**OTHER:**

Ainsworth reported that member Janet Stern has been approached by members of the public about the pending changes to the town’s leaf management program. The issue was raised as to whether leaf management policy is relevant to the STC’s primary mission. Krauss, Stern and Ainsworth agreed to do further fact-finding on the topic by outreach to the Princeton Environmental Commission and Sustainable Princeton. Mayor Freda suggested strongly that PSTC refrain from active involvement in this issue.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Ayes:** Krauss, Stern, Chen, Frawley, Ainsworth, Devoe

**Motion carried.** The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

ACTION	TIME	• RESPONSIBILITY
STC Review of Plans for Witherspoon St Project	Ongoing	Sapudar and subcommittee
Ordinance Revision	February	STC
Prepare for CFMP renewal	Ongoing	Airgood/Chen
Johnson Park Walking Path	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Airgood/Krauss
Sen. Smith Task Force	Ongoing	Chen
Articles for newspaper	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss
EJ plantings	Ongoing	Sapudar/Stern
Nassau St Replanting	Ongoing	Sapudar