

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of January 25, 2022
Virtual Meeting/Zoom Conference**

Voting:

Sharon Ainsworth
Victoria Airgood
Ray Devoe
Patricia Frawley
Lily Krauss
Alexandra Radbil
Janet Stern

Non-Voting:

Sandra Chen: 1st Alternate
Radhika Pola: 2nd Alternate

Council Liaison:

Mark Freda

Town Arborist:

Taylor Sapudar

Guests: E. Brady, R. Rein, and Deputy Administrator D. Stockton

The regular meeting of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission (STC) was called to order on 1/25/22 at 5:00 pm by Ainsworth.

Opening Statement: Read by Ainsworth.

Roll Call: Pola, Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Chen, Ainsworth, Airgood, Freda, Sapudar

Public Comment: none

MINUTES: The minutes of the December 14, 2021, meeting were approved with correction by a motion made by Radbil and seconded.

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

Motion carried.

WELCOME NEW LIAISON - Mayor Mark Freda

Mayor Freda thanked everyone and indicated that he was glad to be the Council liaison to the STC.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER - Radhika Pola

Pola stated that it was nice meeting everyone and that she was looking forward to learning new things and working together.

REORGANIZATION

1. Election of Chairperson

MOTION: A motion was made by Frawley and seconded that Ainsworth be elected as Chairperson of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission for the year 2022.

Ayes: Radbil, Stern, Airgood, Frawley, Krauss

Motion Carried

2. Election of Vice Chairperson

MOTION: A motion was made by Frawley and seconded that Krauss be elected as Vice Chairperson of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission for the year 2022.

Ayes: Radbil, Stern, Airgood, Frawley, Ainsworth

Motion Carried

3. Designation of Secretary

MOTION: A motion was made by Frawley and seconded that Janice Most be designated as Secretary of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission for the year 2022.

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

Motion Carried

4. Review of 2022 Members List

Ainsworth asked if there were any changes or correction. No response signified that the document was correct as noted.

REPORTS

1. Arborist Report

-Sapudar thanked Stern for her help in preparing the Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration grant application. He noted that she had obtained letters of support from the Princeton Historical Society and others. He thanked Chen and Frawley for help with the Tree of the Month initiative, with doing research on trees for February and April and Chen for March.

- Sapudar reported that there have been three tree donations this month, including a donation from L. Liverman for a redbud to be planted in Mary Moss Park. Another donor is providing for three oak trees to be planted in Greenway Meadows and has donated fifteen hundred dollars to the Princeton Shade Tree Trust Reserve.

-Radbil asked if the donation process was working and whether letters had gone out to thank donors. Sapudar responded that the process was working well.

- Sapudar explained that the Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration grant application had been submitted to meet the application deadline. Sapudar indicated that the money, if awarded, would be used for the replanting of the Johnson Park/Trolley Line Trail.

Awards will be announced in August.

-Sapudar announced that the New Jersey Forest Service Nursery would be able to provide white pine seedlings for distribution to third graders as part of Princeton's Arbor Day program. In addition, under its Tree Recovery Program, originally funded by the Arbor Day Foundation, the Nursery still has available bare root seedlings for distribution at community events. Orders are due by February 17th.

-Stern noted that there will be no more Communiversity and asked if seedlings could be given out at Sustainable Princeton events. Sapudar said he would research possibilities. Krauss asked further about the locations for distributing seedlings. Sapudar indicated that there were many opportunities to distribute seedlings that could be explored.

-Ainsworth addressed the distribution of seedlings to third graders on Arbor Day and affirmed that she was glad we could continue to distribute seedlings to them. As for seedlings from the Tree Recovery Program for distribution at larger community events, she agreed that different opportunities for distribution will need to be found.

-Chen pointed out that we have many parks in Princeton that are in need of plantings. Ainsworth indicated that we would need volunteers to do park plantings. Chen stated that she has observed that a major reforestation effort ongoing at Mountain Lakes with volunteers planting and that this could be done in other venues.

-Ainsworth asked what the deadline was for ordering seedlings related to the Tree Recovery program and how many seedlings would we be able to distribute. She noted that in the past we have distributed over 700 seedlings.

-Krauss asked where we could distribute the deciduous tree seedlings. Ainsworth said we could work with Mountain Lakes or Sustainable Princeton. Ainsworth said that we would like to pursue providing tree seedlings for park initiatives but need to figure out how to get them planted. We are willing to do this but need first to figure out the details.

-Ainsworth returned to the Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration grant in relation to the Johnson Park/ Trolley Line trail. Stern described the letters of support and how they were obtained. She reviewed her conversation with the Princeton Historical Society noting that there were two trolley lines.

-In February Stern and Chen, with Sapudar, will meet with the Historic Preservation Commission. As the trail lies in an historic district, the HPC's support of the planting will be needed.

-Stern reported that Princeton Community Housing also sent a letter of support and said that they would love to have input in future projects. The Historical Society is willing to help and has curriculum already prepared related to the history of the trolley line.

-The Witherspoon Street Redevelopment project-was reviewed. Stockton said that Phase 1 has begun with a focus from Nassau Street to Green Street. Bids are being received until mid-February. Some underground improvements are taking place. The existing trees will be removed in early spring by in-house personnel.

-Phase 2 will run from Green Street to Franklin. Sapudar has assessed trees in that corridor and is working with consultants to place his findings on the map for the project. The current design for the road width provides that it will not change, with the same dimension kept. The road may be raised or lowered. No decision has been made to date on this. The sidewalks will be concrete pavers which will allow for tree root movement more than concrete sidewalks do. Urban tolerant trees are being focused upon with placement in more strategic locations.

-Krauss asked if the verge could be increased near the cemetery as the current verge is very narrow. Stockton said relocating the sidewalk to nearer to the street was being considered so that trees could be planted on the cemetery side of the walkway.

Ainsworth asked if there was a timeline for construction. Stockton said one year for completion of Phase 1, given that hotel construction on Chambers Street will also be underway. The trees on Witherspoon will be removed in March with replacement trees to be planted in spring 2023 as part of the last phase of the construction process.

- Sapudar had no news to report on Nassau Street planting which is being carried out under the direction of the State Department of Transportation. Nassau Street is part of a historic district, so any tree planting and sidewalk replacement needs to be done in consultation with the State Office of Historic Preservation. Ainsworth indicated that it was distressing to see how the present scene looks and hopes for improvement.

-Airgood asked if the Nassau Street project included any provision for storage and recycling bins other than on the street. Stockton said this has come up in relation to the Witherspoon Street redevelopment, the bins were recognized as a temporary eyesore but discussion has not progressed with the business owners. An effort was being made to see if the business owners could agree to having trash removed by a single hauler. There is a new contract being undertaken for garbage removal so this possibility could be taken back to the relevant business owners' committee for review.

-Sapudar reported that the Marquand Park Maintenance RFP was sent out to five contractors. In addition, the selected locations for Spring Tree Planting sites will be posted on February 15th.

2., Mayor Report - Mayor Freda again indicated that he was pleased to be the Council representative to the STC and looks forward to working with the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2021 Accomplishments/Goals for 2022 - (Ainsworth/Chen/Krauss)

Ainsworth presented background information on proposed STC Goals for 2022.

-The first proposed goal was preparing recommendations for the next Community Forestry Management Plan. Ainsworth asked for thoughts on the proposed CFMP goal.

-Stern asked when we would know if there were new State Guidelines. Chen said that, while there was an announcement about possible changes prior to the pandemic, there has not been any indication since that changed Guidelines would be issued.

Chen said that the old Guidelines are what we have and that we should presume we will need to use. Chen noted that if we begin work now on developing the plan, we will have time to contact other local organizations and solicit their input concerning what they would like to see in Princeton's community forestry plan for the next five years. Stockton asked what was involved in the plan. Ainsworth explained that the state requires that every 5 years the Shade Tree Commission develop a plan that lays out the municipality's tree care goals and objectives for the next five years. In addition to tree inventory, planting, maintenance, and hazard tree removal, the plan also addresses education and outreach, including at events such as Community. - Plan development is a complex process which has to be carried out every 5 years.

Stockton asked if there was an overlap between the work of the Open Space Manager and the STC. Ainsworth indicated that there were provisions in the plan that would include public parks and related efforts.

Ainsworth asked if Chen would coordinate this effort and Airgood volunteered to help

-The second proposed goal pertained to developing and implementing a communications strategy. Ainsworth asked that a subcommittee to work on communication. Airgood said that she, Krauss and Stern were working on this.

-The third proposed goal was for a new tree inventory. Sapudar reported that monies for a tree inventory are included in the proposed municipal budget. Sapudar added that Princeton is eligible to apply for State funding to help pay for the inventory. The opportunity to apply for a grant up to 50K will be offered at the end of April around Arbor Day. Chen pointed out that often state grants require a municipal match. Sapudar said that the grant funding would be paid to Princeton upon the completion of the inventory work covered by the grant.

-The fourth proposed goal was for tree planting. The STC's Environmental Justice (EJ) subcommittee members Stern and Radbil have already been working with Sapudar on sites for possible tree planting. The EJ subcommittee's focus is on equitable distribution of tree planting throughout the town.

-The fifth proposed goal was on tree maintenance and care. Ainsworth has contacted both Krauss and Airgood on the topic of standards for tree protection during sidewalk and roadway maintenance and repair. Airgood stated that the goal is to obtain information from varied resources prior to review. Krauss stated that we need to have standards for new sidewalks as well as for repairs to existing sidewalks. Stockton indicated that she did have concerns about current practices and would appreciate input from the STC.

-Mention was made that ash tree removal and replacement would continue throughout 2022, as would Princeton's EAB treatment program.

- An administrative goal for 2022 will be to continue management of the Princeton Shade Tree Trust Reserve. Ainsworth will check the balance and would like clarification on how to access funds. It was agreed to revisit this topic in February.

-With regard to the Proposed 2022 STC Goal statement and Summary Table, Stern asked if this was just a document that identified committees to work on various aspects of the goals or for reference for what the commission will do. Ainsworth replied that the listing is an outline of what we agree to work on and reflects how we are implementing the CFMP plan. Discussion ensued regarding the plan and implementation. One matter raised as a concern was oversight of enforcement of Princeton's tree ordinance. Ainsworth indicated that we could add a line item on addressing enforcement. The Commission reviews proposed development plans referred by the planning and zoning boards. Ainsworth agreed we could add a line item related to site plan review and enforcement. Chen called attention to the need to review pending state legislation, citing the work of Sen. Bob Smith. Senator Smith is setting up a task force that will develop a list of items of agreement on stewardship of public lands to be used as the basis for developing land management legislation including municipally held land. Chen urged monitoring of this effort. Ainsworth

asked Chen to develop a summary on this topic and she would pursue outreach to the League of Municipalities.

Stern recommended goals pertaining to community outreach, such as distributing information related to tree care and participating in events sponsored by organizations such as Sustainable Princeton and Princeton Public Library.

2. Terhune Development Urban Renewal - (Reviewed by Ainsworth/Krauss)

Ainsworth indicated that this was a development proposed to address the court mandate on affordable housing. The proposal calls for construction of a four-story residential building.

- A total of 374 trees have been identified by the plan for removal while retaining only 51 of the existing trees. The replanting Plan calls for planting less than 200 trees.

- The current ordinance would require 274 trees to be replanted. The project is exempt from the ordinance's requirements.

- Krauss and Ainsworth are still working on the review of the documents. With that number of trees coming down, there will be a substantial impact. Kraus commented on the lack of diversity in the planting plan and the substantial number of trees proposed for removal.

- Ainsworth asked Mayor Freda to comment. Mayor Freda said the entire shopping center area had been formally declared to be an area in need of redevelopment, and in such a circumstance, the ordinances do not apply. Mayor Freda also referenced the municipality's obligation to provide affordable housing. Enough market-rate units must be allowed along with the affordable housing units to make the project enticing to developers. Some of the planned affordable housing projects have already come before the Planning Board. This will project come up on March 17th. Mayor Freda said the STC still has time to arrange to make comment at the public meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

An update had been previously given in the meeting on the landscaping planned for the Witherspoon Street Reconstruction Project, so this topic was not again discussed under "Old Business."

OTHER

- Stern referenced the bill pending in the legislature, A1776, which Chen had previously distributed to members. Ainsworth explained the process of bill formation, dissemination, and legislative action. Ainsworth explained that there is no Senate companion to A1776 unlike prior bill sessions. This makes it less likely that A1776 will move forward. The greater concern is the plan for developing legislation that would govern stewardship of public lands.

- Ainsworth asked Pola, the Commission's new member, if she had any questions. Pola responded that she is learning about the STC and its work in addition to learning about Princeton itself. Ainsworth welcomed any questions related to STC activities. Pola expressed concern about the extent of the tree removal associated with the Terhune Development Urban Renewal project. She indicated that a similar problem had occurred in her former town (South Brunswick).

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Krauss and seconded.

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

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Addendum: Action Plan

ACTION	TIME	RESPONSIBILITY
STC Review of Plans for Witherspoon St Project	February Ongoing	Sapudar and subcommittee
ISP's for STC members email addresses	February STC meeting	Devoe
Prepare for CFMP renewal	September 2022	Airgood/Chen
Johnson Park Walking Path	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Airgood/Krauss
Member at large proposal	February STC meeting	Radbil
Articles for newspaper	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss
EJ plantings	Ongoing	Sapudar//Stern/Radbil
Clarify ordinance applicability	February	Freda/Ainsworth
Nassau St replanting update	Ongoing	Sapudar

