

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission
February 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes
5:00 pm
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:

Radhicka Pola-1st Alternate

Council Liaison: Mayor Mark Freda

Arborist: Taylor Sapudar

Guests: D.Stockton,C. Taylor, W.Atkins, J.Atkins, L. Maddox, L.Kayman,
LMissozk, P.Tover

CALL TO ORDER: The February meeting of the Princeton Shade Tree Commission was called to order by Ainsworth at 5:00 pm on February 28, 2023.

OPENING STATEMENT: Read by Ainsworth.

ROLL CALL: Krauss, Chen, Frawley, Stern, Devoe, Airgood, Ainsworth, Freda, Sapudar. Pola

PUBLIC COMMENT: W. .Atkins stated support for the proposed changes to the ordinance notification process and raised concern about public education outreach. Ainsworth stated the topic of public education will be on the March agenda. J. Atkins raised the issue of public education for Arbor Day and environmental justice. L. Kayman talked about logging on public lands.

MINUTES– The minutes of the PSTC January 24,2023 meeting were approved as read with correction by a motion made by Krauss and seconded.

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

Motion Carried

REPORTS:

1. Municipal Arborist:

- The Infographic for March will be Benefits of Native Trees. April is open to suggestions from members.
- The Tree of the Month for February is the Eastern Red Cedar; March will feature the White Oak to be written by Chen. A recent town survey about the mayor's newsletter has had many favorable comments about the TOM according to Access Princeton.
- The Municipal Street Tree Inventory is complete with current focus on a quality control check.
- Staff training will be undertaken in March.
- The Street Tree planting contract has been posted. Ninety-eight trees are to be planted with block planting expected on Guyot and Prospect. Trees are to be planted in all sections of town.
- The Municipal Arborist routed 3 inch trees planted within the last four years. Despite wintry weather, the tree crews have been performing new tree maintenance including scraping root flares, removing any remaining tags and conducting structural pruning.
- The Community Forestry Management Plan annual report was submitted.
- The Tree City USA application has been submitted.
- 300 seedlings for 3rd graders have been ordered for Arbor Day.
- 500 seedlings have been ordered for Porchfest distribution.
- Students from PRISMS have been conducting their SLF egg scraping. A notice was posted in the mayor's newsletter and thirty calls resulted. The students will be sharing their results with the municipal arborist who will assist them with species identification.
- At present there are no pending grant applications.
- The Ash Tree injection contract was posted in February with collection data to be posted in April. Areas of concentration include Vandeventer Street, Mercer Street, Harrison Street Park and Marquand Park.
- The Municipal Arborist was asked to present a talk on EAB at the Littlebrook Science Fair. The EAB kit will be used which provides visuals regarding the insect.
- Ordinance planting reminder letters were sent out.
- The municipal arborist and a tree crew representative will be attending the NJ Arborist convention in March and will report back to the STC on current and prospective changes to tree regulations.
- the DOT has been conducting ash tree and line of sight tree removal on Route 206.

Airgood asked about the possibility of providing information monthly on the number of removal permits and plantings. She followed with a question on the planting height of the new trees on Witherspoon and the status of tree planting on Nassau Street. Sapudar said he would do a site visit on the newly planted trees on Witherspoon. Stockton relayed that a plan for Nassau (from Bayard to Moore Street) is expected to be available in mid-March. Sapudar indicated that the town is working toward online tree removal permit applications which will help streamline the process and record-keeping.

Stern complimented Sapudar on the maintenance plan for newly planted trees and then revisited the proposed widening of certain sidewalks and the potential impact on street trees. Stern reminded everyone that by NJ State statute (Sec. 40:64-10), the STC has jurisdiction over all street trees and those in public spaces, and must be consulted when sidewalk improvements or construction would affect trees on these sites.

PLANNING BOARD /ZONING REVIEWS

1. Planning Board Reviews:

217 Witherspoon LLC. 217 Witherspoon St; Block 21:04, Lot 3 Major Site Plan

Krauss reported that the project will not increase the impervious surface on the site but rather will increase the pervious surface with the new landscape plan. Krauss recommended that the STC not approve the plan as proposed as it calls for five Acer rubrum to be planted in a narrow 2' wide verge strip. STC recommends the trees be planted in the lawn area next to the sidewalk. In addition, native ground cover is recommended rather than the monoculture of Liriope.

Motion: to accept the STC response as presented

AYES: Airgood, Chen, Devoe, Frawley, Ainsworth, Krauss, Stern

Motion carried

2.Hun School of Princeton Edgerstoune and Winant Roads; Block 8203, Lot 1 Preliminary/Final Site Plan Review-Poe Dormitory

Krauss reported that the proposal calls for the old dorm to be removed and replaced. The plan calls for the removal of 16 trees, 5 of which are Ash. The replanting plan calls for planting 17 deciduous trees and 1 evergreen; all are natives. The foundation plan calls for a concentration of single species shrubs. Krauss recommends the planting be more diverse to avoid the threat of failure due to future insect or disease issues.

Stern, based on recent research, questioned whether the current 10:20:30 diversity of planting ratio is sufficient. will provide language to address tree diversity planting. In addition, the issue of preservation of larger trees was discussed. It was suggested by Ainsworth that Stern, Krauss, and Airgood might research these topics and offer revised template language for STC review letters.

Motion: by Airgood and seconded to approve the letter and proposed action as per the statement by Ainsworth.

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

NEW BUSINESS

1. PEC Environmental Resources Inventory Project-C.Taylor

Detailed information on this issue is on the website. Taylor noted that the data from the new Municipal Street Tree inventory will be used. Chen asked what the role would be asked of the STC in the development of this inventory. Taylor will alert the STC on matter that may be of interest to the commission.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Tree Ordinance-(Ainsworth)

Ainsworth reminded members that the draft changes to the ordinance on notification under review are the result of STC discussions last year. Ainsworth asked Sapudar to review his professional credentials and to brief members on how the current permit review and notification process is structured as well as how the proposal might be implemented.

Chen then suggested three further amendments to the ordinance. The first pertained to Sec. 22-13(d)(1). She pointed out that the location where a tree is removed is not always the best place to locate a replacement tree. She suggested that the words “in the same or contiguous location(s) on the premises” be replaced with “in appropriate location(s) on the premises.”

Chen’s second suggestion pertained to Sec. 22-16(a)[3](4). She noted that the STC always makes its decisions at its regularly scheduled monthly meetings. Depending on the number of days in the month, these are sometimes more than 30 days apart. Following discussion, it was agreed that “30 days” should be changed to “40 days” in the ordinance. If an appeal is pending in August when the Commission does not regularly meet, the 40 day limit would necessitate the Commission calling a special meeting to reach a determination within the 40 day period. A lengthy discussion by members with input from Maddox about timelines occurred. It resulted in agreement to recommend removal of the 30 day provision to until the next subsequent STC monthly meeting

Chen’s third suggestion pertained to the definition of “replacement tree.” She pointed out that a replacement tree is defined as having a 2.5” DBH. She noted that transplanting is traumatic for trees, and that it is best to plant lawn trees when they are young, as seedlings or whips. Some desirable native trees are difficult to transplant as 2.5 DBH trees (beech, hickory, sweet gum, hornbeam, sassafras, tupelo, walnut and white oak). She recommended that an exception allowing trees smaller than 2.5” DBH be planted as replacement trees in lawns. Creating such an exception was not supported by other STC members or the municipal arborist, so Chen withdrew the recommendation.

Airgood referred to the hand delivery section which skewed the delivery processes and suggested deletion to address clarity. The proposed deletion was not supported by members.

Motion :by Krauss and seconded to accept the draft ordinance with amendment

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

Motion Carried.

2. New Jersey Task Force Final Report-(Chen)

Chen reported that the "New Jersey Task Force Final Report" was formally released at a joint hearing on February 22 of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee. (A day prior to this STC meeting, Chen had emailed a link to the full Final Report to all STC members.) Chen explained that Senator Smith was keeping the record open for three weeks and had invited anyone who wished to do so to submit comments.

3. Invasive Species LegislationS2196(Chen) postponed

4. Small Tree Seedlings for Distribution-(Chen)postponed

5. QR Codes-(Ainsworth/Sapudar)postponed

OTHER: Devoe suggested for Porchfest that the STC include the possibility of seeking pictures of trees that have been planted from the prior seedling distributions. Further discussion on the proposal will take place in March at the next STC meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Devoe and seconded.

Ayess: Airgood, Chen, Devoe, Frawley, Krauss, Ainsworth, Stern

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38.

ADDENDUM-ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TIME	• RESPONSIBILITY
STC Review of Plans for Witherspoon St Project	Ongoing	Sapudar and subcommittee
Ordinance Revision	March	STC
Prepare for CFMP renewal	Ongoing	Airgood/Chen
Johnson Park Walking Path	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Airgood/Krauss
Review of STC template text	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss

Articles for newspaper	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss
EJ plantings	Ongoing	Sapudar/Stern
Nassau St Replanting	Ongoing	Sapudar
Porchfest	Ongoing	Ainsworth/DeVoe