

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission  
Minutes of September 27,2022  
Virtual Meeting/Zoom Conference**

**Members**

**Voting:**

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

**Non-Voting:**

Sandra Chen: 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate  
Radhicka Pola 1<sup>2nd</sup> Alternate

**Council Liaison:**

Mayor Mark Freda

**Town Arborist:**

Taylor Sapudar

**Guests:** D.Stockton. L.Kayman, H. Persky, J.Atkins, B. Atkins, M. McInerney

The regular meeting of the PSTC was called to order on 9/27/2022 at 5:04 pm by Ainsworth.

**OPENING STATEMENT:** Read by Ainsworth.

**ROLL CALL:** Radbil, Stern, Devoe, Frawley, Ainsworth, Sapudar, Mayor Freda, Pola.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Both adjacent and non-adjacent property owners were present to voice concerns over several issues related

to tree removal at 107 Laurel Dr. The issues discussed included the number of trees removed, the lack of the required adjacent property owner notification and other ordinance related concerns. After public comments were heard and responded to by STC members and the mayor, the discussion concluded with specific issues to be addressed at the October STC meeting. A legal review will be sought on the ordinance issues raised with consideration on the adjacent property owner notification procedure.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the July meeting were approved with correction by a motion made by Stern and seconded.

**Ayes:**, Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Devoe, Ainsworth.

**Motion carried.**

## **REPORTS**

### **1. Arborist Report**

-Sapudar reported the STC subcommittee met to discuss utility friendly trees for the next phase of Witherspoon Street project. The recommendations included American Hornbeam, Japanese Tree Lilac (a mature specimen at the corner of Mercer and Alexander Rd.), Yoshino Cherry (specimens at Monument Hall), and Maackia (specimens at the corner of Birch and Bayard Lane).

-The new street tree plantings and landscaping on the upper end of the Witherspoon Street project (Nassau to Spring St.) should be completed before the holiday season.

-The STC website infographic for September focused on the negative impact of topping trees. October's topic will address recommendations for pruning and cabling trees.

- The Street Tree Inventory project has been approved by Council and the Order to Work was just recently issued by the State. DRG will likely begin work in mid-October.
- The September Tree of the Month was the Willow Oak researched by Chen. October will feature the Kentucky Coffee tree. November's tree will be the Ginkgo.
- Princeton Tree Care won the tree removal contract. The work is more than 95 percent completed exceeding expectations.
- The grant application for Johnson Park Path was not successful. The planting improvements have been included in the Open Space Capital budget for 2023.
- ARS Tree Service is the contractor hired by PSE&G for utility work throughout the Municipality. This work is mandated by the State Board of Public Utilities with the Municipality neither paying for the work nor writing the specifications.
- The Fall planting contract was awarded to Sunset Creations with one hundred trees to be planted.
- Two Commemorative trees will be planted in Quarry Park.
- Fall color is expected to be less vibrant this year due to the drought and heat conditions experienced this summer (<https://www.nj.com/news/2022/09/will-fall-foilage-be-dimmed-by-heat>).
- October 13/14 is the NJ Shade Tree Convention. Copies of the registration form are available from Ainsworth. Online registration is also an option.
- 87 trees were inspected by SP volunteers. A work order will be generated for internal staff to address the issue identified by the volunteers. When completed, photos of the work will be sent to the volunteers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Planning Board Review**

**195 Nassau/9-11Charlton/13 Charlton; Block 47.01 Lots 23, 26, 27**

**Applicant: Nassau 195 LLC**

**Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan**

**701 Mt. Lucas Rd; Block 2802, Lot 1.01**

**Applicant: Mt. Lucas Properties, Inc.**

**Major Site Plan**

Comments on the above projects were submitted to the Planning Board by the STC property review subcommittee (Krauss/Ainsworth) since the deadline was before the regularly scheduled STC meeting. The response documents state the review was conducted by the subcommittee. Copies were provided to the full STC in the September agenda packet.

## **2. TREE ORDINANCE(107 Laurel Tree Removal)**

Discussed during public comment summarized above.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **1. STC Volunteer Training-(Sapudar/Stern/Radbil)**

Stern reported that she and Radbil prepared worksheets, maps, and surveys for the volunteers recruited by Sustainable Princeton to survey the street trees in two Princeton neighborhoods. The survey was conducted on 9/15/22 and a report on trees needing attention has been submitted to Sapudar. As noted in the Arborist report above, the town crew will follow up.

#### **2. Member at Large Proposal-(Radbil) no report**

#### **3. Noticing-(Stern)**

This item was incorporated into the earlier discussions under both Public Comment and Tree Ordinance (107 Laurel Tree Removals). In response to the members of the public present, Stern addressed the problems the STC has had in the past several years with lack of required property owner notification and the consternation that this causes residents who find about tree removals too late. She asked Mayor Freda if Noticing could be within the purview of the new Enforcement Officer.

Stern stated that the underlying problem, including with Noticing, is the widespread lack of importance accorded trees, particularly with respect to development. Stern provided several examples in Canada, where municipalities are now doubling or tripling the value of mature trees. She said that the Biden Administration is initiating a new program, National Capital Accounts (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/briefing-room/2022/08/18/a-new-national-strategy-to-reflect-natural-assets-on-americas-balance-sheet/>), which urges local governments to view resources as a form of capital and to measure ecosystems and accord them proper value, in accordance with the services they provide.

### **OTHER**

Chen joined the STC meeting an hour late as she had been attending a meeting of the Task Force established by Senator Smith to identify policies for improved protection and management of public forest lands on which there is consensus.

Ainsworth invited her to give an update on the progress of the Task Force. Chen reported that the Task Force Co-Chairs had not been able to find consensus on (i) whether/when tree cutting should be allowed; and (ii) whether trees cut on public lands should be allowed to be removed from the site, for sale or for any other reason. The Co-Chairs seemed therefore to be shifting their approach and

focusing more processes to be followed in developing plans for management of public lands. As the new concepts were offered only in draft, Chen said it would be necessary to wait and see how this new direction evolved. Senator Smith has required that the Task Force submit its final report by the end of this calendar year, so the timeframe yet available to make progress is limited.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Ayes:** Stern, Frawley, Radbil, Devoe, Ainsworth.

**Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.**

o **Addendum: Action Plan**

ACTION	TIME	RESPONSIBILITY
STC Review of Plans for Witherspoon St Project	Ongoing	Sapudar and subcommittee
Prepare for CFMP renewal	Ongoing	Airgood/Chen
Johnson Park Walking Path	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Airgood/Krauss
Member at	Ongoing	Radbil

Large proposal		
Sen. Smith Task Force	Ongoing	Chen
Articles for newspaper	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss
EJ plantings	Ongoing	Sapudar//Stern/Radbil
Nassau St Replanting	Ongoing	Sapudar