

Princeton Shade Tree Commission
Tuesday, October 27, 2020
5:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting/Zoom Conference

MINUTES

Members

Voting:

Sharon Ainsworth
Victoria Airgood
Welmoet Bok van Kammen
Patricia Frawley
Lily Krauss
Alexandra Radbil
Janet Stern

Non-Voting:

Sandra Chen: 2nd Alternate
Ray Devoe: 1st Alternate

Council Liaison:

Michelle Lambros

Town Arborist:

Taylor Sapudar

Guests: Kip Cherry

The regular meeting of the PSTC was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on 10/27/2020 by Ainsworth.

Opening Statement: Read by Ainsworth.

Roll Call: Bok van Kammen, Radbil, Stern, Devoe, Frawley, Chen, Ainsworth, Airgood, Krauss, Sapudar.

Public Comment: Kip Cherry commented on the spotted lanternfly (SLF) and its increasing presence in Princeton. Many counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey are impacted. Public education is critical. The biggest host is the tree of heaven, so possibly the DPW could be asked to look for this tree and cut down any found. The SLF also likes fruit trees and blueberry bushes. Many are concerned about this and realize that we need to cut down host plants. It would help the community to know more about this insect and how to deal with it. Sapudar did receive communication from Cherry and has a plan on behalf of the municipality. We have put extensive information on the STC website, and information has been included in the Mayor's newsletter, but we need to reach out more in addition to what has been posted and promulgated to date. *Ailanthus* trees are being removed as quickly as possible. Rutgers and Master Gardeners are also

involved in trying to remove the *ailanthus* and the insect itself. Princeton University is using both remediation and education. Cherry indicated that increased education is important and might include the educating of Council.

Minutes: The minutes of the September 22, 2020, meeting were approved, with one amendment, through a motion made by Airgood and seconded.

Ayes: Bok van Kammen, Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Airgood, Ainsworth, Krauss.

Motion carried.

REPORTS

1. Arborist Report

--Sapudar commented on the volume of *ailanthus* trees and spotted lanternflies that have been identified, with some SLF also on red maples when there is no *ailanthus* in the vicinity. The nuisance of the SLF has been noted. The prevalence of the insect is increasing. Bok van Kammen noted that the SLF is on other tree species as well.

--Fall planting is ongoing with 104 trees being planted and pruning occurring also. The planting bid was won by Sunset Creations, who should be finishing this week. The spring planting list is up to approximately 85 trees with a mix of block planting and resident requests. Ten trees from last fall's planting of seventy-six trees have died. Sunset is aware of the replacement needs and cannot get retainage until trees are replaced. It has started planting those trees this week.

--The crane contract has been awarded to David Wells of Wells Tree and Landscape. Twelve trees throughout the town will be taken down, with half done at this point.

--Removal of hazardous ash trees is also continuing. We are saving by using only in-house staff and PSE&G. It would have cost in the six figures if it had been bid out.

--We are tightening up the contract for the inventory, which we aim to complete by 2021.

--Preliminary stages of a new Nassau streetscape are under consideration with the survey of Nassau Street completed. Nine species of trees have been selected, and the list will be narrowed down. Twenty-two trees will possibly need to be removed and approximately 38 new trees planted. There is a municipal meeting next Tuesday to discuss logistics of planting; Sapudar is leaning towards removable tree grates as part of the installation.

--Sapudar has been in talks with the State Forestry Department about pruning on Nassau Street to take place during Princeton University's winter break. There is a meeting on Monday, November 2, to identify all pruning needs.

--Chen and Radbil have learned about grants for surveying that might be possible.

2. Council Liaison Report

--Princeton was approached by the Sourlands organization about drafting a resolution regarding the Emerald Ash Borer. The Sourlands have over 4,000 acres of ash trees (20 million trees). The Sourlands Emerald Ash Borer Resolution will be discussed later in the meeting.

--Lambros suggested the purchase of balled and burlapped holiday trees for the central business district that could be decorated and perhaps adopted for permanent planting later in some of the parks. The Shade Tree Trust Reserve fund might be used for this purpose.

--Council is keeping busy through the Covid pandemic.

--Radbil asked about the commemorative plaque program and would appreciate any information about progress. Lambros stated that the Public Art Review committee has not yet met, and there is no update at present.

--In regard to the holiday trees mentioned earlier, Airgood asked about the source of this idea. Lambros indicated that the project would occur on Nassau and Witherspoon Streets, possibly in conjunction with the Princeton Merchants Association. Airgood suggested a partnership: the STC could purchase the trees and the merchants could decorate. Sapudar said he could obtain the trees at a good price through his contacts, or perhaps local Christmas tree farms could donate the trees. The total cost would not exceed \$4,000.

NEW BUSINESS

1. PRELIMINARY/FINAL MAJOR SITE PLAN (Krauss)

Princeton Thanet Road Urban Renewal, LLC/Princeton Senior Apartments, 100 Thanet Road; Block 5502, Lot 4. Pending submission.

Krauss stated that, basically, on 2.16 acres, 59 trees were to be removed. The landscape plan shows many varieties of trees to be planted, including 48 evergreen trees, ornamental trees, and continuous beds in the parking lot. Water retention basins and rain gardens are also proposed. In sum, the project calls for planting more trees than are being taken down, and we have no objection.

Airgood asked about the 59 trees that are being removed with 58 being replanted, questioning the math according to our replacement schedule. Airgood also asked to what extent is an ornamental a replacement? Airgood noted that on the final page of our response, she would like to see rewording: safeguarding should apply to all trees, not just vulnerable trees.

Krauss and Ainsworth figured out the math on tree replacements. The TPZ paragraph will be included in all future site plan reviews.

Bok van Kammen asked about the choice of trees, and Krauss responded that they were trying to go with native trees. Bok van Kammen questioned the selection of pin oaks, asking if we could suggest other trees since there needs to be consideration of BLS. Sapudar replied that almost every tree has the possibility of some problem, but that we could ask for substitution of white oak, which is a new cultivar that does not get as many diseases.

Radbil indicated that she learned from her core training that the STC should be involved in planning earlier in the process so that its expertise can be of more benefit. STC involvement early in the planning process could provide more rationale and education, lessening or eliminating the need to revise plans.

Krauss indicated that this suggestion should be sent to Council: that is, an STC member should be involved in plans *before* they are finalized, not after. This idea was proposed earlier but was resisted. Radbil also can provide a checklist of questions that can be considered as plans are developed.

Cherry asked about developers' planting non-native trees. According to Krauss, some trees have been here so long that they can be considered native.

Airgood noted that in the final paragraph of the STC response, the final sentence should include fencing, as required per ordinance.

Stern identified an orientation plan for the two sites under consideration and asked about the numbers relating to the several ground covers to be planted (Krauss explained that there are to be five different species).

Bok van Kammen questioned whether we need to send a copy of the TPZ in the letter.

Motion to approve the adjusted site plan review letter was made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Krauss, Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Bok van Kammen, Ainsworth, Airgood.

Motion carried.

2. PRELIMINARY/FINAL MAJOR SUBDIVISION AND SITE PLAN (KRAUSS)

Princeton Thanet Road Urban Renewal, LLC/Multi-Family, 100 Thanet Road, LLC; Block 5502, Lot 4. Submitted to Planning Board October 19, 2020

Krauss outlined the site including the present buildings and driveway. The buildings would be demolished and replaced with 220 units in 2 apartment buildings. 305 trees would be removed, many of them ash trees. The applicant will plant 280 trees on site, some of which are ornamental. The number of trees to be planted is fewer than required; Stern asked about the paragraph that proposes to plant more trees at an alternate location. The arborist would normally decide between having the requisite number of trees planted elsewhere and collecting the ordinance-designated contribution to add to the Shade Tree Trust Reserve fund. In this case, Sapudar said the best solution would be to seek a contribution to the STC trust fund.

(Mark Freda has joined the meeting.)

Chen asked whether it was too late to caution about planting what is proposed and to suggest alternatives. Krauss said that the response has already been sent. We may have another opportunity to respond and suggest alternatives to current proposals.

Sapudar said he never had this many trees that needed to be planted elsewhere, so it is important to consider alternative ideas.

Chen noted that on occasion others have asked to plant a grove, so it may be possible to provide alternatives such as park groves.

3. Sourlands Emerald Ash Borer Resolution (Lambros)

Lambros reviewed the resolution history. Comments were requested. No comments were heard. Airgood indicated that we as the STC can support this resolution.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Shade Tree Trust Reserve Fund Proposals (Ainsworth)

Last month STC members were asked to suggest places in town where mass plantings might be considered. Ainsworth reiterated Lambros' idea of using a small amount of the STC Trust Reserve fund for holiday trees, as described earlier in the meeting. Lambros proposed using the fund to purchase about 20 trees, which would cost between three and four thousand dollars. Sapudar would get an estimate for the cost of the trees. He can also provide a means to get the trees to their locations. The question of whether the Merchants Association will decorate the trees was raised without resolution. At the end of the holiday season, the trees could be

replanted in any of several parks, with the town taking the responsibility for replanting the trees. The STC could decide where to plant the trees in question.

Devoe asked for a timeline for planting and decorating.

Chen asked whether there were local organizations that could be encouraged to donate decorations for these trees. The question of who would decorate and how to control the whole process was reviewed. How to maximize publicity for this was also reviewed.

Motion to approve STC's purchase of evergreens for the holiday season, with funding to be used from the STC Trust Reserve fund and the amount not to exceed four thousand dollars, was made by Airgood and seconded.

Ayes: Radbil, Stern, Krauss, Airgood, Bok van Kammen, Frawley, Ainsworth.

Motion carried.

2. Vegetation Management Response Act (S434) Update (Ainsworth)

The bill is now assigned to the budget committee, and the Board of Public Utilities has convened stakeholders to seek common ground on the idea of vegetation management in municipalities. Bills may stay on hold until a consensus is reached. For the short term, progress has been made in slowing the legislation down.

3. Update to Website and Addition of TPZ (Sapudar/Lambros)

Sapudar stated that there will be training next week for municipal employees on the use of the new website. Lambros stated that the idea is to decentralize the website, with various department heads in charge of their portion of the website. Lambros reviewed the development of the website and the plans to go forward in use and function. Stern questioned what input the STC would have for the website. At present several subject tabs are proposed with no input from the STC. Ainsworth asked when the new website would go live, with response that the end of the current year is the goal. Sapudar indicated that everything that is on the current website would be on the new site. Nothing would be changing, but anything proposed for posting would go through Sapudar. Radbil questioned the process of establishing the current site without input from the STC.

Airgood will provide a summation of TPZ for the website.

4. Shade Tree Federation Conference/Core Training (Chen/Radbil)

Chen and Radbil noted changes to come in the Community Forestry Management Plan and grants that are available. Chen stated that the state made clear that they would redo the forestry management plan, and that will include many changes.

Every municipality will be required to have a professionally conducted inventory. Chen indicated that certain items had to be included in the inventory, so we need to ask Sapudar to make sure that what the state requires is in the inventory. Sapudar will contact state officials to determine necessary inclusions.

Chen produced a memo that will be included in next month's agenda. Many changes are being proposed. The state will create a guidance document that it will issue next October at the Shade Tree Federation meeting.

Radbil reported on the core training and the conference itself. The importance of trees is being emphasized. We should all be on the listserv of the Shade Tree Federation and should sign up for all the changes that are under consideration, according to Radbil.

Radbil briefly reviewed the process of “Phenology”--when natural events happen--and how we should be tying these events to the activities we need to take part in, e.g., adjusting the timing of treatment for EAB until pollinators have decreased, in which case it would be best to treat the EAB until after trees bloom.

Radbil noted that Rutgers has a Forestry Club which is willing to work on selected projects.

Legal issues discussed at the conference included the use of personal emails for STC business. STC members should instead set up Gmail addresses for this purpose.

A paid position for a secretary exists, and the STC should avail itself of this.

The state wants STCs to have equal footing with other departments. Trees should be considered infrastructure, just like storm drains.

Various other items were reviewed and presented to the STC members for consideration, including grant applications. Radbil also noted eight invasives which are currently attacking trees.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Krauss and seconded.

Ayes: Stern, Frawley, Radbil, Airgood, Krauss, Bok van Kammen, Ainsworth.

Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Addendum: Action Plan

ACTION	DUE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
NJ Department of Forestry Management Plan	November STC meeting	Radbil/Chen
Vegetation Management Response Act Update	November STC meeting	Ainsworth
Website Update and Addition of TPZ to Website	November STC Meeting	Sapudar/Lambros
Review of Princeton Shade Tree Trust Reserve Fund for proposed holiday use	November STC meeting	Sapudar
Commemorative Tree Fund update	November STC meeting	Lambros