

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission
Minutes of February 23, 2021
Virtual Meeting, Zoom Conference**

Members

Voting:

Sharon Ainsworth

Victoria Airgood

Patricia Frawley

Lily Krauss

Alexandra Radbil

Janet Stern

Non-Voting:

Ray Devoe: 1st Alternate

Sandra Chen: 2nd Alternate

Council Liaison:

Michelle Lambros

Town Arborist:

Taylor Sapudar

Guests: Rabon, Grace, Schwartz, Truscelli, Haynes

The regular meeting of the PSTC was called to order on 2/23/21 at 5:01pm by Ainsworth.

OPENING STATEMENT: Read by Ainsworth.

ROLL CALL: Radbil, Stern, Frawley, Chen, Krauss, Airgood, Ainsworth, Lambros.

Bok van Kammen has resigned and Sapudar is absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES: The minutes of the 1/26/21 meeting were approved with corrections by a motion made by Krauss and seconded.

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

Motion carried.

(Devoe entered the meeting.)

REPORTS

1. Arborist Report (recapped by Ainsworth)

--The municipal Tree Care position has been filled. Spring planting will include 70 trees, with the contract posted on 2/11/21. Block planting will occur in the 'A' neighborhood that includes Cuyler, Dempsey, and Walnut Streets. The trees on Spruce adjacent to the cemetery are being planted to compensate for the ash trees removed for the Linden project. Small block pruning will occur on Western Way.

--The Elm Road walking path project includes removal of ash trees, awarded to Justin's Tree Service with work scheduled to begin in March. DPW will handle the needed tree work on Mountain Avenue. The walking path reconstruction should be completed by the summer of 2021. Planting recommended by the subcommittee will be scheduled for fall 2021, with discussion to begin following the ash tree removals.

---The 10K Leadership in Communities Grant was not awarded to Princeton.

--Sapudar has applied for a 40K grant from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, in order to help with the costs of the Elm Road walking path. Awards have not yet been announced.

--Construction TPZ document was completed in February and distributed to colleagues in the Engineering Department with uploading to the website to follow.

--The ISA conference will be virtual this year with Sapudar and a municipal bucket operator planning to attend.

--The Community Forestry Report was submitted to the state on 2/16/21.

--The ash injection contract will be sent out in March. Sapudar asked if there were any ash trees that the STC would like to see injected. At this point, most trees to be injected are in the Harrison Street Park and along Vandeventer Ave.

--Marquand Park maintenance contract was sent out to 5 contractors on 2/5/21.

- The Open Space manager and laborer positions have closed, with interviews to follow.
- DPW and the Board of Health office have switched spaces but are still both in Monument Hall.
- Radbil has asked to review the RFP for the tree inventory.
- Radbil asked for an update on the donation of tree plantings.
- Radbil asked for an update on the planting of a grove of trees requested by a private citizen.

2. Council Liaison Report

- Lambros announced that the plaque is being created and will be shipped shortly. Council did have a goal setting retreat; Lambros noted that the tree inventory expense was included. Ash tree treatment and replacement are underway and are not new goals. Radbil brought up the plan for ash tree removal and asked for a review of the status of removal.
- The STF pointed out that while tree removal is an ongoing expense, the expense of Tree of Heaven removals related to the SLF should have been included in the budgeted goals, because it is a new undertaking. Lambros said that she would check.
- There should be a budget item to take care of storm-damaged trees. Sapudar has been using DPW workers--that is, in-house labor--to remove many ash trees.
- Lambros indicated that one-time projects include Nassau and Witherspoon Streets.
- Commemorative tree donations program is a goal for STC.. Airgood asked more about goals included in the Council retreat, including the Nassau St. streetscape.
- Radbil responded that she sent Lambros goals that included the Nassau St. streetscape and the Witherspoon project. Airgood asked for clarification. The Nassau St. project for this year includes redoing the sidewalk and replanting trees starting at Bank St. and continuing to Palmer Square. The Witherspoon

St. project is the one-way redesign, for which Princeton has a \$3 million grant. Since Nassau St. is a state road, while Witherspoon is a local road, there are different guidelines for each.

--Airgood asked about the potential bike corridor; Lambros said that the study was accepted, but sidewalks will most likely not be impacted. Neighborhood meetings will be held to determine an equitable way forward.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Planning Board Review

480 Bunn Drive: Block 44.01, Lot 2

PCH Development Corporation/Princeton Community Village Associates LP Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan

Krauss noted that the project is exempt from some regulations and overall has many good aspects. A number of trees are under consideration including Callary Pear, which is on the DNP list, and spirea. Krauss recommended alternatives.

E. Truscelli and V. Haynes were present to respond to questions about the project. Devoe asked about the exemption to the Shade Tree ordinance mentioned and why there is an exemption. Reference was made to the municipal code.

All in all, the plan is acceptable according to Krauss except for the pear and the spirea. Stern asked what number of trees was coming down and then asked if the plan was exempt from just the number of trees removed or also from replanting requirements. The project is exempt from tree removals and from plantings in the parking areas. Stern also asked if they had a landscape architect. She commented that, in view of the town-wide incorporation of EJ, the PCH might try to involve the residents in decision making. Truscelli remarked that the

residents have been involved, and most wanted parking because of the maturity of the community and lack of public transportation. Truscelli also noted that rain gardens are proposed--an opportunity to engage residents in maintaining the rain gardens. Stern again urged that EJ be considered in the process. Chen noted that the trees to be planted are not native and sought consideration of native species. As long as cost is not prohibitive, it can be considered, was the response. Radbil proposed that exploring funding for planting native species could be considered. Plans should take into account the role trees play in storm water management.

Krauss suggested taking out from the replanting plan the little leaf linden and replacing it with an Armstrong Freeman maple. Modifications that were presented will be included in the STC response, as well as a list of native trees.

Motion to accept the draft document made by Airgood.

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

Motion carried.

2. Planning Board Review

54-60 and 64 Witherspoon Street: Block 20.04, Lots 54 and 55, Palmer Square Management LLC/EA Management Major Site plan. Speaking for the plan: L. Rabon, B. Grace.

An overview of the proposed plan indicates a mixed use building with two recessed entries and exits. Krauss noted that this was proposed earlier, with the courtyard now moved to the interior of the building. The street tree plantings proposed include an Eastern redbud, Armstrong Freeman maple, and shrubs including Clethra and Fothergilla.

The street trees are proposed to be planted in 4' x 4' spaces on Witherspoon and Hulfish Streets. Krauss suggested lawn strips to improve survivability. Airgood asked what the obstacles for adopting Krauss's suggestions would be. Airgood also asked if there would be a follow-up letter of comment for

the commissions. Krauss noted that there is too much concrete, and that trees appear to be an afterthought but should instead be a primary concern. Rabon, representing Palmer Square Development, indicated that she had not heard Krauss's concerns before, and they will certainly be considered and discussed with the engineering company and department. Radbil noted that this was an exciting opportunity to complement the redesign of Witherspoon St., to lead the way with more creativity. Radbil then asked who maintains the trees after planting; the response was that they become municipal trees. **Motion** to accept the draft document prepared by Krauss made by Airgood and seconded.

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

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Website Procedure: Boards, Commissions, and Committees Revised Handbook

Discussion began with a focus on the revised BCC Handbook, with Stern citing the portion related to the website and the procedure for posting changes to the website; she noted that the Handbook seems to be clear about each commission having responsibility for its own website. The website is the responsibility of the BCC. At present the STC process consists of a subcommittee review with recommendations on content and change brought to the attention of the STC; the town has the ultimate authority on what goes on the website, although it will be only the rare occasion when the town will object or disapprove. Sapudar is in the process of moving items from the old to the new website, with Radbil urging that Sapudar's postings should in turn be reviewed by the STC.

Airgood asked why Sapudar has the responsibility of the website; Lambros responded that each

department is in charge of its own website. The process was reiterated: the website subcommittee makes recommendations at the STC meetings for additions and deletions to the website. Other members can suggest further changes to the website at the meetings. The STC reviews all recommendations and votes to accept or decline, with results forwarded to Sapudar, for him to post on the website. The STC will also review Sapudar's changes.

Attention then returned to the BCC Handbook, p. 4, where there is a listing of STC powers that are sourced from state law. Chen said that the list of powers needs to be more complete. Airgood offered to help Chen compile a full list of powers for the next revision of the Handbook.

2. Environmental Justice and the Urban Forest in Princeton (Radbil/Stern)

All governments are moving toward the concept of EJ. Princeton Council passed on June 8 Resolution 20-195 related to EJ, noting the need to ensure racial equity. Stern and Radbil presented a history of EJ as it relates to Princeton. There is a focus on community input, with our initial goal achieved when all residents enjoy the benefits afforded by healthy environments.

Radbil noted that EJ needs to be applied to the CFMP, looking at goals through the EJ lens. Most of the tree planting is through resident request and ash tree replacement. We should look at whether we are addressing tree planting in terms of EJ. Airgood asked whether we have a town-wide canopy assessment. Krauss suggested that we get out and visit communities where there are fewer trees to see what the communities would like. Stern and Radbil asked the STC to consider what the next steps should be. Ra.ory oru and google map wshowl where gaps wexidst and also where gasp in ash trees existdbil that the invent

OTHER: None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Krauss and seconded.

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

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Addendum: Action Plan

ACTION	DUE DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
Long-term Goals, Municipal Budget, and Tree of Heaven Removals	March STC meeting	Lambros
Holiday Tree Project Review	March STC meeting	STC Members
Research into ISPs for STC Members' Email Addresses	March STC meeting	Devoe
Tree City Webinar Review	March STC meeting	Radbil
Commemorative Tree Planting Guidelines	March STC Meeting	Lambros/Radbil
Zoom Use by Sub-Committees	March STC Meeting	Ainsworth

Environmental Justice, Minority Involvement, and the STC CFMP (EJUF)	March STC meeting	Radbil/ Stern
Johnson Park Walking Path Project	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Krauss/Airgood
Comments/edits on TPZ Doc. for Website	March STC Meeting	Airgood/Sapudar/Stern
Items/Content to Be Reviewed for Addition to or Removal from Website	Ongoing	Sapudar/Radbil/Frawley