

Princeton Shade Tree Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023
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

Radhika Pola-1st Alternate

Council Liaison: Mayor Mark Freda

Arborist: Taylor Sapudar

Guests: D. Stockton

OPENING STATEMENT: read by Ainsworth

ROLL CALL: Chen, Airgood, Frawley, Stern, Krauss, Ainsworth

MINUTES– The minutes of the May 26, 2023 meeting were approved with corrections by a motion made by Krauss and seconded.

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

REPORTS: Town Arborist

-Defoliation of sycamores was the infographic for June.

-July will focus on Elm tree maintenance.

-Sycamores have started to fill out recently after the spring anthracnose outbreak.

-Arborist has received many calls about why the sycamores look the way they do.

-This year has been a bad year for cherries, crabapples, and dogwood due to the two weeks of cold, wet weather at the time of budbreak.

-July infographic will focus on young tree summer maintenance.

-August infographic is open.

-TOTM for June is the American Smoketree; July will feature the Franklinia tree with a specimen tree located in Marquand Park; August is open.

-The fall street tree planting contract is filling up.

-Currently working on an open-space tree removal contract to clean up precarious ash trees in open-space wooded parcels; the contract will be posted in September.

- Still waiting to hear back regarding the CFMP Annual Report and prospective state forestry changes to the CFMP standards.
- There are currently no pending grant applications.
- The ash tree injection contract was won by Princeton Tree Care with all injections complete on Vandeventer, Mercer Street, Harrison Street Park and Marquand Park; a total of 57 trees with a cumulative DBH of 1468 inches were injected.
- Sapudar has developed a health care program for the Downtown Municipal Business Streetscape; SaveATree tree service will be performing the first application of micronutrients via deep root feeding to the Witherspoon Street trees once Earle Asphalt has completed their punch list; three feedings will take place.
- The STC has received a five-hundred-dollar donation to the reserve fund as well as a request for a commemorative tree (white oak) with plaque to be planted at a location to be determined.
- A 82-inch low impact spider lift has been ordered which will be used in open areas that are not accessible to the bucket truck.

(Devoe joined the meeting at 5:10)

NEW BUSINESS

375-377 Terhune Road, Block 7401; Lots 4.01 and 4.02 RB Homes, Inc. Major Site Plan with Variances

Krauss described the project which consists of two residential lots. The proposed development consists of two affordable housing buildings containing three apartments each and four town home buildings (six units each) yielding a total of 30 residential units. 88 trees are to be removed with 123 new trees to be planted. The project needs to diversify tree species and increase the size of the verge A.

Krauss read the proposed STC response letter. Airgood asked about the loss of canopy.

Motion made to accept the draft without amendment by Airgood.

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

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. NJDEP Draft Model Tree Ordinance Update-(Stockton)

Stockton updated the STC indicating that DEP is working through comments received regarding the draft Ordinance. Nothing has changed with January 2024 being the date that Municipalities would have to adapt Ordinances that align with the model. Ainsworth asked if the STC can receive a copy of what the town submitted; Stockton agreed to forward to the STC. Chen asked if Princeton would be one of the towns that would be contacted regarding submitted comments. Airgood asked if submitted comments were publicly available: Stockton indicated that she thought not.

2. **Princeton Tree Ordinance-(Chen/Stern)**

Chen asked Stockton if Princeton would proceed to amend its ordinance or if it would wait until a Model Tree Ordinance had been submitted.

Stockton indicated that we should wait to amend the current Tree and Shrub Ordinance once State Model Ordinance has been adopted. Chen focused on the exemption section and offered four potential changes. It was agreed the Ordinance review needs further discussion and consideration.

3. **Microforest Project-(Ainsworth)**

As indicated, Ainsworth reached out to T. Sands about this project. Airgood felt that using STC funds to support the project would be appropriate. Chen suggested a bench might be a useful contribution. Ainsworth suggested waiting until later in the year to determine a contribution when the project's needs have been finalized.

4. **Revisiting Ordinance Section 22-14(a) Regarding Consideration About Whether to Approve or Deny a Permit – (Stern)**

Stern reviewed the document, sent to members ahead of time, that showed her proposed revisions to and updating of Section 22-14(a), concerning what factors the Enforcement Officer should take into account before issuing or denying a permit to remove regulated trees. She said that, given the certainty of climate crises now and in the future, more attention must be given to the services mature healthy trees provide to a community, and that those benefits do not end and begin at property lines.

Some members felt that the criteria was too abstract, and others felt that they needed to be abstract, since it was always going to be a matter of the Enforcement Officer's judgment. Rather than proceed through all the proposed changes, it was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to review the document and refine it. The subcommittee members will be Stern, Airgood, and Chen. Their conclusions may not be ready in time for the July meeting, but there is some leeway in time, since Stockton noted that the STC should propose all its Ordinance changes to Council at one time, and we still do not have the final draft of the State's Model Tree Replacement Ordinance, which will likely require additional changes to Princeton's Trees and Shrubs Ordinance.

5. **Status of Bill S2186/A3677to Ban Sale of Invasive Species-(Chen)**

The bill was passed by the Assembly in May. A revised version was introduced in the Senate in June. Regretfully the revised version failed to include several provisions that are important to the nursery industry. It was therefore unclear whether the measure would be voted on in the Senate's final June session.

OTHER

Stern presented a leaf that approached a record holding size. Sapudar indicated that it looked like a leaf from an American Sycamore rather than a Maple.

Devoe had one entry for trees planted from seedlings as part of the photo contest program.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Devoe and seconded.
Ayes: Chen, Airgood, Krauss, Devoe, Frawley, Ainsworth
Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Addendum: Action Plan

ACTION	TIME	RESPONSIBILITY
STC Review of Plans for Witherspoon St Project	Ongoing	Sapудар and subcommittee
Ordinance Revision	Ongoing	STC
Prepare for CFMP renewal	Ongoing	Airgood/Chen
Articles for newspaper	Ongoing	Stern/Airgood/Krauss
Nassau St Replanting	Ongoing	Sapудар