

**Princeton Shade Tree Commission  
Minutes of November 16, 2021  
Virtual Meeting-Zoom Conference**

**Members**

**Voting:**

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

**Non-Voting:**

Sandra Chen: 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate  
Ray Devoe: 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate

**Council Liaison:**

Michelle Lambros

**Town Arborist:**

Taylor Sapudar

**Guests:** J. Most, M. Pola

The regular meeting of the PSTC was called to order on 11/16/2021 at 5:02 pm by Ainsworth.

**OPENING STATEMENT:** Read by Ainsworth.

**ROLL CALL:** Radbil, Stern, Devoe, Frawley, Chen, Krauss, Sapudar, Ainsworth.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Radbil noticed that the link to join the STC meeting was not working on the town website when she last checked. Most joined the meeting briefly to explain the process and timing of the linkage. Ms. Polo was welcomed to the meeting as a guest. Polo stated that she had recently moved to Princeton from South Brunswick where she was a member of their STC. Further, she explained her interest in joining the STC. Chen stated that there was an application form on the website which should be filled out and submitted to begin the process.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the October 26, 2021, meeting were approved with correction by a motion made by Radbil and seconded.

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

**Motion carried.**

## **REPORTS**

### **1. Arborist Report**

- Sapudar met with the D. Levi, Princeton University Arborist, and will meet on a monthly basis to discuss shared services. A good rapport has been developed.
- The staff has had a meeting pertaining to construction and state statutes. Engineering should be in attendance at the next STC meeting.
- Tree of the month for December will be the Eastern White Pine; January will be the River Birch.
- The Holiday project includes 35 evergreens and some deciduous trees. A mix of conifers will be picked up Monday or Tuesday of next week.
- The Witherspoon Street Redevelopment project is still in design for tree pits which will be at least 5ft by 10 ft with structured soil underneath. A six-inch curb will also be installed including cut outs to allow for inflow of storm water. Trees under consideration are honey locust, ginkgo, espresso coffee tree and hackberry. Planner consensus is that shade trees are wanted for the canopy but should not block the first-floor signage of businesses.
  - Nothing new on Johnson Park.
  - Some smaller parks have been neglected which the new Open Space Manager will address.
  - The donated commemorative trees have all been planted at Harrison Street Park. The goal is to get this in the papers to encourage more donations of plantings. In addition to the grove planted in Harrison Street Park, a Princeton Elm was planted in Farmview Park which is located off of Great Road. A Cherokee Princess Dogwood was planted in Marquand Park.
- Krauss emailed Sapudar about the ginkgos and questioned reconsideration since this is not a native tree. Krauss recommended willow oak or other natives instead. Sapudar said you need a tree canopy for urban landscape which the ginkgo provides but perhaps a willow oak would also work. Ainsworth added support for the ginkgo for its lovely fall color and leafing. Chen indicated that she too had emailed Sapudar questioning the inclusion of ginkgos, a non-native tree species, but that he had responded that the ginkgo has a proven track record as an urban tree.
  - Chen then asked about the newly appointed Open Space Manager. Sapudar responded that her name is Cynthia Tayler and described her background and education. She has worked in the nonprofit sector. Her goal is to establish open walking space, connect green space, and encourage community events.
  - Stern commented on the newly dedicated open space acquisition off Cherry Valley Road and asked whether walking paths would be established in the area.

### **2. Council Report- no report**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Nassau Street Holiday Tree Project-(Ainsworth)**

Ainsworth indicated that she would like to have more members involved in tree decoration. Trees should be ready for pick up on Monday and in place the same day. Ainsworth has the

decorations from last year's tree but is open to new ideas. Stern suggested highlighting the new deciduous trees that will be planted on Witherspoon St. after the Bradford Pears are removed.

Radbil asked if Lambros has worked with businesses to see if they are interested in adopting a tree. Lambros is the point person for adopting trees. Ainsworth indicated that there was more interest in adopting the trees than there was last year. For a theme, Stern suggested highlighting the new deciduous trees that will be planted on Witherspoon St. after the Callery/Bradford Pears are removed.

## **2. At-Large Members Proposal-(Radbil)**

Radbil reported that there are ways for the commission to expand itself. We are limited by state statues for the actual numbers of the commission but in addition there could be members at-large who could not vote but who could work with the commission on various tasks. Former commission members who have expertise could continue to offer their service as needed. With at-large designation limited to former members. Radbil then asked if this idea was worth exploring further. Stern stated that she liked Radbil's idea but suggested more structure of the at-large members. Radbil responded that members at-large could undertake projects that are smaller and less time consuming. Stern asked if we do this, does every commission also have the ability to do so. Chen indicated that it would be helpful to clarify what privileges and responsibilities would be entailed in the new positions. Ainsworth indicated that she was concerned about the time and effort required in organizing volunteers. Radbil offered to draw up a list of activities and outline how the plan could be administered. Stern suggested that perhaps STC members who leave the commission could become member at large. Ainsworth will check to see if there is any administrative reason not to pursue this idea. Radbil suggested that the activities could be less structured but items could focus on what the commission considers important. Krauss brought up the idea of legal protection for STC members and asked if this protection would apply to members at-large. Chen explained, and Sapudar concurred, that law extended liability protection to any volunteer participating in a community forestry program, not just to commission members.

### **OLD BUSINESS::**

- 1. Witherspoon Street Landscape Update and Nassau Street Replanting Update-(Krauss/Sapudar) discussed above**
- 2. STC Statutory Authority on Sidewalks-(Airgood/Chen)**

Ainsworth asked if there was an update on this. Chen responded that there needs to be an update from the Arborist, as he had indicated that he receives information on sidewalks at the prior meeting with the administrator. What will be considered in the future to make sure that damage is not done to trees for future projects is a central issue.

Sapudar indicated that there needs to be less disconnect between town departments. Ainsworth suggested that we question the administrator at the December meeting.

**3. Johnson Park Walking Path Project-update  
(Ainsworth/Airgood/Krauss/Sapudar)**

No new information.

**4. Witherspoon Street Redesign/Bradford Callery Pear Tree Removal-(Lambros)**

Sapudar indicated that the planned removal should be made known to the public. The trees are being removed but will be replaced. Krauss suggested using the kiosk to alert residents about the removal. Radbil said there should be an explanation and information. Sapudar will discuss the process with Town Topics. Ainsworth suggested that the mayor might want to address this in his newsletter. Sapudar suggested using the municipal website to address the removal and replacement.

**5. STC Partnership with Princeton University Best Practices Program-(Ainsworth)**

The Arborist has developed a working relationship developed with PU landscape personnel. We could work together on many projects.

**6. Urban Tolerant Trees-(Sapudar)**

The trees to be planted for the Witherspoon Street project are those listed on the spreadsheet that Sapudar had emailed out to the commission. Radbil asked if Sapudar was to provide a list of new plantings that Stern and Radbil can use to compare to the EJ idea. Sapudar reviewed what had been planted but will forward a list to use for comparative analysis.

**7. Noticing Letter to Newspapers-( Airgood/Stern)**

Stern questioned how to proceed but needs to talk to Airgood and Lambros regarding procedures. What needs to be decided is an agreement that we would have a list of topics to be addressed in TT. Stern said we should develop a list of topics and suggest them to TT. Stern is talking about a whole series of articles that could be addressed perhaps monthly. Krauss mentioned that we have a budget but we could use our budget and write articles that would address our concerns. Stern suggested articles that were Q and A. This could be a public service announcement stated Ainsworth. Chen asked if we sent something from STC for publication, paid or unpaid, does it need approval from the town. Sapudar will check to see if this is an issue. Krauss suggested that members could write an article, pass it to Sapudar and then go from there. Stern .Krauss and Airgood will begin this process on a trial run.

**8. ISP's for STC Member Email Addresses-(Devoe)**

No progress to date.

**OTHER:**

Ainsworth asked Radbil to update on the Harrison Park project. The stone wall setting should be repaired soon. The donor was pleased with the size of the trees that were planted. Sapudar said species and spacing look good. Radbil noted that the tags were still on the trees and the mulch is covering the root flare which needs to be cleared up. Monday at 11 is the scheduled date for publicity photos. The donor is happy and may donate more as may her friends. Radbil said a nice article should spur community interest.

- Devoe asked when a tree impacts power lines what happens. Devoe lost power which started a fire but repair began within an hour with work cleaned up quickly.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

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

**Ayes:** Stern, Frawley, Krauss, Radbil, Ainsworth

**Motion carried**

**Meeting adjourned at 6: 4;9 pm.**

**ADDENDUM: ACTION PLAN**

Addresses	Meeting	
STC's Statutory Authority on Sidewalks	December STC	Airgood/Chen/Lambros
Johnson Park Walking Path Project and Planting List for Review/spring weeding	Ongoing	Sapudar/Ainsworth/Krauss/Airgood
STC Review of Proposed Plans for Witherspoon St. Redesign (with particular focus on the Bradford/ Callery Pear tree removal)	December STC meeting	Lambros and STC
Bullet List of Topics Related to Tree Ordinance Enforcement by Municipal Departments and Boards	ongoing	Airgood (for Discussion with Mayor and Town Administrator)
Nassau Holiday Tree Project Discussion	December STC meeting	STC and Laambros
Noticing letter to news outlets	ongoing	STC
EJ plantings	Nov-Feb	Spudar/Radbil/Stern
Nassau St. Replanting Update	Decemberr STC meeting	Sapudar
Input from Municipality on	December STC meeting	Ainsworth/Lambros