

Palmer Township, Northampton County

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

April 3rd, 2025, 6:30PM, Lower-Level Municipal Meeting Room, 3 Weller Place

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Shannon Wisniewski, David Demopoulos, Pat Romano, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert, and Zach Trexler.
- b. Absent: Sandi Bush and Andrew Melhem.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:49PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 6th, 2025

- a. Wisniewski made a motion to approve the minutes with one amendment, and Romano seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business

a. Newsletters/Community Outreach

i. Q3: Arbor Day, Bare Root

- 1. Wisniewski said we should use the August edition to share outcomes and photos of the Arbor Day celebration as well as the bare root planting.

ii. Q4: Street Planting

- 1. Wisniewski said we should use the November edition to share information about the free street tree program.

b. Grants

i. Tree Pennsylvania Bare Root Spring 2025

- 1. Wisniewski confirmed with Hilbert that she would double-check the pickup time for the trees since there was some discrepancy across emails. Hilbert said he will be there early just in case. Wisniewski thanked Kistler for pivoting the planting plan to a different site. Kistler said he will present to the Board of Supervisors the new planting plan on Monday night and that he hopes to receive consensus that it is a good move. Wisniewski asked Kistler and Hilbert if they had any preferences as to which trees went where, and Kistler asked how many species we would be receiving and Wisniewski said 11. Kistler asked what her recommendation would be, and Wisniewski said she wouldn't group the same species together. Kistler said we will probably put the larger trees on either end of the driveway, and we will work internally to develop a full planting plan. Wisniewski asked if there is a tentative planting schedule, and Kistler said we hope to plant the day following the pickup. Hilbert said he will leave the tags on all the trees so they can be identified. Wisniewski said once the

trees are planted, she will come through and get the trimming done.

2. Wisniewski said the Bare root application for Fall opens in August and we will revisit Old Orchard Park. She said we will begin this process after Arbor Day.
3. Romano asked Kistler of the trees planted last year how many were a direct replacement of trees removed a few years ago. Kistler said he believes we are all caught up. Romano stated that he has a neighbor who had a tree removed and never had a replant occur, and Wisniewski said we should direct her to the free street tree program.
4. Colin Burke asked if the trees to be planted will attract any sort of wildlife, and Wisniewski said that birds and other wildlife will certainly visit the area. She said the more trees we have, the better chance at various migrations we will have.

c. Earth Day – Saturday April 19th, 2025

- i. Wisniewski stated she had worked with Trexler to print out various flyers and a poster to display at the event. She said we will also display info on the invasive replace program. She said only other thing she is still working on is a game for kids to play. Wisniewski and the other Commission members discussed taking shifts to ensure the Shade Tree table would be covered at all times. Wisniewski asked Trexler to check and see what kind of materials we have left from last year and he said that he will check. Wisniewski asked what time they should show up to begin setting up, and Trexler said we will be arriving around 8am to begin setting everything up.

d. Arbor Day – Friday April 25th, 2025

- i. Wisniewski stated that all the elements of the Earth Day event will be used again on Arbor Day in conjunction with additional events. She said we will have our own raffle, and we have secured the food truck. She said she is still waiting on the DCNR Forester to get back to her to confirm if he can make it in order to read the proclamation. She said we will be planting three trees in total. Two of them will go on the end of the island and the other will be the demo planting during the event in front of the Police Department. Wisniewski said the trees for the island are being donated by Site Solutions LLC and the Strasko family. Wisniewski asked how donations would work if they were in the form of a check or cash, and Trexler recommended accepting only tangible donations. Wisniewski said in terms of sitework ahead of time, we will want to remove all the stone in the area and Hilbert said he will make a circle for the tree. Hilbert said he

will put mulch there to make it easier for the kids to dig the hole. Wisniewski said she coordinated with the Police Department, and everything is good with them. Kistler and Hilbert suggested reaching out to Snowscapes to see about donating the third tree. Wisniewski said she will share information with Trexler to circulate on social media, and she also asked about how to go about releasing a press release, and Trexler said he was unable to find any information. Wisniewski said she will reach out to the environmental reporter for Northampton County to inquire about the process. She said once they hit the wire, we will also do a social media campaign with them.

- ii. Kistler asked if the plantings on Arbor Day have the approval from either the Township Manager or the Board of Supervisors, and Trexler said there were no objections when discussed at the most recent staff meeting but it was not discussed with the Supervisors. Kistler instructed Trexler to ask the Township Manager if it needs to be brought before the Supervisors. Kistler said the safest way to go about doing this business is to run it by the Township Manager and Assistant Manager and sometimes even the Supervisors.
- iii. Wisniewski requested that a Gator bag and plastic sleeve be brought to Arbor Day to use during the planting demonstration and Hilbert confirmed. Wisniewski asked how much the bags cost and Kistler said \$20-\$40 per bag.

4. Open street identification

- a. Demopoulos spoke about the work he has been doing in mapping street tree openings across a specific portion of the Township. He displayed the GIS map he had created that he has been adding all of the data to. He explained the GIS map in detail. Kistler mentioned how impressive the map was. Wisniewski said this is basically a reverse tree inventory. Trexler asked how many total tree openings were currently present and Demopoulos said 523, which encompasses the southern 1/3 of the Township.
- b. Kistler asked how many people requested a replant so far, and Trexler we are in the 30's. Kistler asked if there was a way to incorporate the requests into the existing GIS map and Demopoulos said he can do it with access to the Excel data. Wisniewski said her intention is to utilize this map when processing the tree requests prior to conducting a site visit sometime in May. Wisniewski asked if a login was needed to access this map and Demopoulos said he could work around that. Wisniewski said this is a fantastic start, and the next piece is determining which of these locations can actually accommodate a tree. Wisniewski said there are grant opportunities available to us to complete site testing to determine the degree to which a specific area can accommodate a tree. Colin Burke said that he

is a drone pilot, and he is willing to help in any way that he can. Wisniewski asked how long it took Demopoulos to complete this phase of the project, and he said about 3 months. She suggested continuing to map the remainder of the Township over the next few months until we reach a point where Demopoulos is ready to present the completed map. Demopoulos said he can make the map generally accessible and will share the link for everyone to access. Wisniewski said she is uncertain of what the next steps should be considering there is currently no protection of these assets within the Township. She said once that issue is addressed, we can more clearly move forward. Kistler said this map is a great optic to be used in a presentation to explain how big this really is, as well as a way to track removals within the Township, and the Commission agreed. Burke asked if we could extend this program onto State roads as well, and Kistler stated that the Township does not own any right of way along State roads. Wisniewski asked Trexler to share the street tree request log so it can begin to be incorporated into this GIS map prior to any walkthroughs or site visits occur. Wisniewski asked Kistler if he wanted to be involved with any of the site evaluations, and Kistler said he can be more involved when the list is weeded down through the first layer of evaluations. Wisniewski asked Demopoulos if he could prioritize mapping the requests into the GIS map so that it can be viewed at the next meeting. Kistler asked if the homeowner will get the chance to agree or disagree with what the Commission will propose, and Wisniewski stated that after the assessment is complete, we can reach out to the resident to explain the proposal and ask for a meeting to discuss further. Romano asked if the program was intended to be one tree per property and Wisniewski stated that it was not specified. Trexler said so far, we have received 39 requests for a total of 66 trees. Kistler said that Trexler could develop 39 different maps of each property to show what can be accommodated. Wisniewski agreed and suggested that the map could be included with the proposal to the requestor. Kistler confirmed that ideally, we would be doing these plantings in October. Kistler stated that these plans need to be locked up and finalized by mid-August in order to get an RFP out in time prior to an October planting schedule, and Wisniewski said she is targeting July. Kistler said that July is an aggressive target to hit with all of these site visits needing to occur. Wisniewski asked if tree species needed to be decided for the RFP, and Kistler said it certainly comes into play. Kistler said the species is more important than the location when it comes to the RFP. Wisniewski said we can decide later on if we want to continue to push the program out in order to gain more requests due to the constraints we are working under.

5. New Business

6. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. None at this time.

- b. Street Tree Program**

- i. No other report at this time.

7. Public Comment

- a. Colin Burke – 1415 Stones Crossing Road**

- i. Asked what the odds are of the new trees' survival as well as if the larger trees steal water and nutrients from the smaller and newer trees.

Wisniewski said the trees communicate with each other in order to avoid competition. She said new trees need to be watered often in order to ensure survival. Kistler said in various parks we went around twice a week to fill the gator bags with water until we got a hard frost. He said now that the trees are starting to bud, we will once again begin filling the bags with water weekly. Kistler said he has always been told to water trees for 1 year for every inch of caliber of tree that the tree was when it was planted, and after that it should have established enough of a root structure to survive on its own.

8. For the Good of the Order

- a.** Demopoulos said he will get the map to other members soon so everyone can access it.

- b.** Wisniewski suggested attending future Tree Tender training if available and stated how beneficial they are.

- c.** Wisniewski thanked Kistler and Hilbert for their continued partnership and support in the Commission's endeavors.

9. Next meeting: May 1st, 2025

10. Adjournment

- a.** Romano made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Demopoulos seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:14PM.