

Palmer Township

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2022, 6:30PM at Palmer Township Municipal Building

1. Roll Call

- a. Present: Jamie Collins, Paige Strasko, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert
- b. Absent: Patrick Romano, Joseph Armato
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM. There was not a quorum present to make any decisions, all items discussed in these minutes will be acted on in November.

2. Approval of meeting minutes

- a. There was not a quorum present to approve meeting minutes

3. Old Business

a. Tree removal permits

- i. Collins explained that the ordinance process has been more difficult for her than first anticipated and she may reach out for help from other township employees soon. Until then Collins stated that the tree removal permits agenda item will continue to the next meeting when she hopefully has a more concrete plan or written permit process for the committee to review.

b. Where to plant 10 donated trees and 20 grants trees

- i. Collins stated that the township did not receive the grant trees that were previously discussed and was not sure where there was miscommunication. Collins and Kistler discussed future grant trees that will be available, time constraints for those grant trees that were missed and future opportunities of the Shade Tree Commission (STC) taking over grant writing for right-of-way trees/street trees in the township. Collins asked if the 10 donated trees were going to be included in the list she was creating for locations of trees to replant. Collins, Kistler, and Hilbert discussed why the trees were donated. Collins stated Strasko can keep the agenda item as two separate items in Old Business, so they were remembered for the future.

c. Where should residents dispose of bamboo?

- i.** Collins stated that she contacted a few different nurseries around the country, none were very local, and everything that she could find in her research described how to contain and manage bamboo, but not how to dispose of it. She is hoping that the nurseries will contact her back soon with possible solutions. Collins stated that she lets her own bamboo scraps simply dry out and described her experience with her bamboo plant. Collins and Kistler then discussed the composting process at the yard waste facilities and what the township's concern was with residential bamboo. Kistler confirmed the main concern of the township is live bamboo making its way into compost and growing around the township, becoming a nuisance. Kistler also stated that the goal is to keep the bamboo out of the yard waste inventory. Collins and Kistler discussed if yard waste attendants should be trained to look for bamboo and if a new policy needs to be implemented. Collins, Strasko and Kistler discussed the township bamboo ordinance and the issue that came from that since the ordinance does not tell residents what to do with bamboo clippings or waste. Collins asked Strasko to send her the township bamboo ordinance. Collins also brought up other yard waste that should not be accepted in the residential bins or at the facility. Collins suggested having a separate conversation about training yard waste employees about other prohibited or noxious plants that should not be accepted at the yard waste facility. Collins stated as soon as she heard back on her bamboo question, she will let those concerned know and at the next meeting the STC can determine an official stance and update.

d. Updating township tree planting standard construction documents

- i.** Collins stated she began reviewing the documents that Strasko sent her via email and will continue to work on those and have an update on changes soon.

e. Storm damaged trees- will the township be replacing trees damaged/knocked down after a storm?

- i. Collins asked Kistler if any more residents had called to ask about this issue and he said no. Collins stated the STC did not need to discuss this issue separately without Armato present, and because the topic will be covered in the new ordinances.

f. Protocol for residential messages/questions

- i. Collins asked Strasko if she found answers to the questions of the previous meeting regarding using a township email, business cards, etc. Strasko stated the STC could use her township email for residential contacts and that the township prints their own business cards and Collins could send her a design and Strasko could get them printed. Collins stated she would like to use the STC letterhead from the township and that Strasko should make the business card. Kistler, Collins and Strasko discussed a phone line, residential contact and Strasko becoming point of contact for any tree related issues in the township to properly and timely alert the STC and all concerned parties (I.e., Public Works, Codes and Zoning, etc.). Collins and Kistler asked Strasko to email all township department heads to alert them, if they receive any residential questions, concerns, or complaints about trees to alert Strasko. Collins, Strasko, and Kistler also discussed new personnel changes and who would be involved in future residential contacts.

4. New business

a. Social media letter drafts

- i. Collins asked Strasko if she had worked on the drafts that were sent and where they ended up. Strasko stated she needed to review and edit those drafts and she would update Collins when she reviewed the drafts. Collins and Strasko discussed new STC members, adding STC member photos to social media posts/newsletter articles, and having all STC members able to be in the public and educate members of the public on tree related issues. Collins asked Strasko to send Romano an email asking for a photo and a CV or blurb about why he's on the STC for the introductory social media post/newsletter article. Kistler and Collins discussed if the STC would use

the next newsletter as a recruitment tool or an educational tool. Collins stated both and discussed also utilizing social media. Kistler and Collins also discussed having ID cards for STC members going out to residences to inspect right-of-way trees to make residents feel more comfortable.

b. Memorial tree planting

- i. Collins reiterated that she was not in favor of having memorial trees with plaques, she was mainly concerned with residents and businesses using their own signs and having hazards in parks and open spaces that may be mowed over or tripped on. Collins, Kistler, and Strasko discussed the township policy on signage. Kistler, Hilbert, and Collins discussed the one memorial tree planting a year by a funeral home, the typical process that happens with the planting, the type of tree, and the plaque that is placed at the tree. Collins summed the item up by stating that the item can be taken off in the future, if someone wants to donate a tree that is always welcome, but the donation should follow the Ashton Funeral Home protocol, where the tree location, planting, and species is decided the township. Collins mentioned if this becomes a popular practice to have a list of locations where trees are needed so that memorial plantings can be completed more efficiently. Kistler also mentioned including in the quarterly newsletter all the trees that were donated and who they are memorializing, or a protected zoning style sign with names of people who donated trees rather than having signs at each individual tree. Other STC members will decide at the next meeting.

c. Subcommittee establishment and areas to work on

- i. Kistler stated that he spoke with Robert Williams about having sub-committees and Williams was fine with that, Strasko added that she also spoke with Brenda DeGerolamo about the matter, and she stated if the sub-committees follow the Sunshine Act it would be fine. Collins thought the STC should use social media to recruit subcommittee members to involve other people in information gathering. Collins and Kistler discussed who subcommittee members are or could be, how information

would be shared with the subcommittee members and STC members/township employees, and the upcoming addition of Strasko's father, Paul Strasko. Collins, Strasko, and Kistler discussed the process of adding new STC members and confirmed Paul Strasko would be a member once the Board of Supervisors (BoS) voted and appointed him.

d. Other new business

- i.** Kistler and Collins discussed spring/fall tree plantings in 2023, budgeting for them, storage, and budgeting for the removal phases that are left in 2023.
- ii.** Collins also mentioned a note she heard of from Supervisor Young about not removing dead trees and Kistler discussed his conversation with Young but advised that the STC not take any action on the comment until advised to do so.
- iii.** Collins brought up contacting Armato for help with STC questions, such as budget questions and legal questions. Kistler suggested making a list and Collins discussed budget items with him further. Collins and Kistler also discussed tree plantings for 2023, securing a landscaper, and tree storage and care.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i.** Armato was not present to report on BoS

6. For the good of the order

- a.** Collins asked Strasko if she had an answer to the questions about liability on her end concerning writing letters to residents and Strasko stated she had not been able to find out for her. Collins stated she would contact DeGerolamo directly with her question to make sure she is legally covered.
- b.** Kistler and Collins stated they would not be able to make the November 28th meeting date and discussed the best day to reschedule the meeting for. The group decided that the meeting tentatively will be rescheduled for November 21st. Collins decided it would be best to cancel the December meeting since it would be right between Christmas and New Year's.

- c. Collins asked to add two more STC members to make the total members five instead of three to the next agenda as new business and asked Strasko to find out if that would be possible for the future.

7. Next meeting: November 21st- tentative

8. Adjournment

- a. Collins adjourned the meeting at 7:37PM.