

Palmer Township, Northampton County
Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2023, 6:30PM Municipal Building Lower Level

1. Roll call

- a. Present: Jamie Collins, Paul Strasko, Shannon Wisniewski, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert, and Paige Strasko
- b. Absent: Mike Brett and Patrick Romano.
- c. The meeting was called to order at 6:36PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 30, 2023

- a. Mr. Strasko made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January. Collins seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business

a. Tree removal permits/ordinances

- i. Wisniewski was awaiting an official appointment from the Board of Supervisors (BoS) and came to participate in the meeting. Current STC members introduced themselves, as did Wisniewski, and discussed what their backgrounds are and what made them interested in joining the STC. Township staff also introduced themselves to Wisniewski and what their role in the Township is, as well as the history of the STC. Staff and STC members informed Wisniewski of the work the Commission has been doing and the general direction of where the STC would like to go with replanting, education, and future ordinances. Collins also explained that she has encountered many other Townships in New Jersey that have tree removal permits and how Palmer should think about moving in this direction.
- ii. Collins stated the STC are working with Michael Brett and Kent Baird to update tree ordinances and that the agenda item remains to remind members of making progress.

b. Upcoming grant trees

- i. Collins also stated that the STC keeps this item on old business to keep it in their minds and invited Wisniewski to bring anything she sees about free trees to the meetings or let Ms. Strasko know so the Township can obtain them. Collins stated the more free trees the better. Wisniewski asked about what qualifies a grant tree, and Collins discussed the different standards for grant programs. Wisniewski described how her family propagates trees and gives them to neighbors. Ms. Strasko also discussed the grant tree programs that she found in her research. Ms. Strasko stated she would inquire with Township staff about purchasing cuttings from Arbor Day Foundation. Kistler explained what programs the Township has participated in in the past, including Tree Vitalize.

c. Bamboo

- i. Residential drying process**
 - ii. Employee Training**
 - iii.** Collins stated she had the information for a bamboo educational article and that she would be working to get a draft to Kistler either before or during an STC meeting. Collins explained the bamboo ordinance to Wisniewski and the problem it created because there was no information for residents on where to dispose of their bamboo cuttings.
- d. Update Township tree planting standard construction documents**
 - i.** Collins also stated that there are comprehensive documents she found that would also be sent to Kistler for review. Mr. Strasko discussed having the right tree in the right place.
 - ii.** Kistler updated STC members on specifics of a tree planting that Parks and Public Works completed near the bike path such as tree species, spacing between plantings and location of the plantings. Collins commended them and stated that the trees will lift the path in a few years. Collins also discussed new research that shows how far a tree's roots grow and described that tree roots take up an area three times larger than originally thought.
- e. Sidewalk remediation**
 - i.** Collins explained and discussed the complex issue of sidewalk remediation and gave an example of the neighborhood of Woodridge Falls since several residents attended the last meeting. Mr. Strasko and Collins discussed removing sidewalks rather than removing trees. Collins also mentioned that when she drove through the neighborhood there were fresh cuts of trees. Kistler, Mr. Strasko, and Collins discussed what to do for replanting trees around sidewalk, right-of-way distances, utility locations, costs, and logical approaches of recommendations to make to homeowners. Wisniewski stated it would take longer to get a large tree back than moving sidewalks. STC members and staff discussed what the purpose of sidewalks are, possible fixes, and problems that they have run into while searching for a solution. Members also discussed the variety of sidewalk issues that homeowners face in Palmer Township. Collins stated the STC may need to section the Township by neighborhoods and look at problems more specifically to make recommendations and move quickly before homeowners remove all the street trees that are left. Collins asked Mr. Strasko to identify neighborhoods that are in dire need of sidewalk remediation and what his recommendations for them would be for members to discuss at the next meeting.
- f. Social Media letter drafts**
- g. Subcommittee establishment**
 - i. Romano: areas to work on**
 - 1.** Although Romano was absent, Collins explained subcommittees to Wisniewski and explained that people could volunteer to help

research, but not to be part of the STC or commit to coming to meetings.

2. Collins also mentioned community education as an area for a subcommittee, as well as community activities and fundraising for trees and contractor's time, and any other areas other members can work on.

h. Palmer website updates and protocol

- i. Collins mentioned an area for subcommittees to work on was social media posts and asked input from Ms. Strasko who explained they do not have a Facebook page yet, but there is a landing page on the Township website for the STC. Collins, Ms. Strasko and Wisniewski discussed creating a list of topics to add to the website, an introduction of members including photos, and Wisniewski offered to draft content for Ms. Strasko to review for an STC Facebook page.

4. New Business

a. Arbor Day Celebration

- i. Collins stated that Ms. Strasko had reached out to the STC and informed them of an Arbor Day event that the BoS wanted to schedule for April 28th at the Charles Chrin Community Center. Collins stated that before the Arbor Day event the Commission should get member introductions out on social media so residents can become familiar with the STC and the members beforehand, then the STC could follow up on Arbor Day as well. Staff and STC members discussed timing, how to get donations for fundraising, planning of events for the day, advertising locations, the scope of the event and educational topics such as demonstrating different planting styles and education in schools about trees and Arbor Day. STC members discussed goals for an Arbor Day event in the future and programs to work up to.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. Michael Brett was absent and could not present on BoS updates.

b. Tree City USA

- i. Collins asked if the STC should ask Kent Baird to attend every second or third meeting to update members on the Tree City Program. Ms. Strasko stated she works with Baird on Tree City and can give the STC the updates they may ask for. Ms. Strasko then shared that she and Baird spoke with a representative from the Tree City Program and updated their application with supplemental information, now they are waiting to hear back if Palmer was approved for the program or not. Collins mentioned the STC possibly having a booth or table at Palmer Days.
- ii. Wisniewski asked what work she could accomplish between then and the next meeting. Collins discussed topics that the STC could educate residents on, one being native plants. Wisniewski suggested lists of native

plant nurseries in the area and discussed some of the nurseries she and Collins have visited in the area. Collins also mentioned discussing where to find free trees with residents and educating them, and sourcing some plants, materials, or resources that the STC could educate residents about.

6. For the Good of the Order

- a. Collins mentioned she would most likely not be able to make the next meeting because of a work conflict that was rescheduled, and that Mr. Strasko can run the meeting next month. Collins also expressed her thanks to Wisniewski for joining the STC and showing so much interest in the Commission.

7. Next meeting: March 27, 2023

8. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Strasko made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Collins seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:49PM.