

## **Palmer Township**

### **Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes**

**June 27, 2022, 6:30PM at Palmer Township Municipal Building**

#### **1. Roll Call**

- a. The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM.
- b. Present: Chairperson Jamie Collins, Lee Hilbert, Scott Kistler, Paige Strasko, Joseph Armato joined a few minutes late and resident Yvonne Schaeffer.
- c. Absent: Patrick Romano

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 31, 2022**

- a. Since Romano was not present there was not a quorum to vote on approving the minutes. These will be postponed until another committee member can be present to approve the minutes.

#### **3. Old Business**

- a. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code
  - i. Collins wanted to include these items to discuss with Romano but since he was not in attendance the commission continued to item 3C.
- b. Township of Palmer Code of Ordinances
  - i. Collins mentioned updating the Township Ordinance.
- c. Palmer Township Policy and Procedures for Trees and Sidewalks within Township Right-of-Way
  - i. Collins stated there was little in this policy and that Shade Tree Commission (STC) should discuss changing the Township policy. Collins also stated she wanted to review all the ordinances and policies with the commission and then the Commission can work with the township on specific aspects of the ordinances/policies. Kistler agreed and stated that the policy needs to be better defined. Collins went into specifics of the ordinance with Kistler, and he suggested that STC produce a reasonable plan for sidewalk replacement. Collins and Kistler discussed planning of sidewalk trees being replaced and who will be responsible for sidewalk repairs in the future. Kistler explained the widespread problem of tree roots lifting sidewalks and that STC may need to assess the issue to better understand the problem and to find a solution that everyone will be able to live with. Collins stated they may need a special meeting to further discuss. Collins mentioned the new policy will need to include replacement of street trees and tree removal permits.
- d. Review of proposed acceptable and prohibited tree lists for the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO
  - i. Collins reviewed the list of trees and she thought there were species that could be removed from the acceptable list and some species that could be added back on the list. Collins mentioned that native plants on the list are important but there are some non-native plants that help build the diversity





replaced on the committee. Collins stated she and Strasko can work on the announcement together and get it in the newsletter.

#### **4. New Business**

##### **a. Tree removal permits**

- i.** Collins stated that she wants to get this in place sooner rather than later but there is a lot to do. Armato stated he would also like to see this initiated because he has seen a lot of residents in the Northwood development taking down healthy trees for no reason. Collins responded by saying that having other township ordinances, like DeGerolamo mentioned at the last meeting, would be helpful to have a starting point. Collins asked Strasko to find sample ordinance and suggested looking at Mont Claire New Jersey ordinances and Armato suggested looking at Bucks County ordinances.
- ii.** Collins explained what her job entails for private homeowners and how the ordinances she must follow in New Jersey are very detailed down to the caliper and how many trees homeowners must replace depending on the size of the tree that was removed. Armato stated he wanted to have ordinances like that before new housing developments are built. Kistler described the importance of informing local tree contractors that the township is putting a permit system in place for tree removal.
- iii.** Collins asked Armato discussed the new changes coming to Palmer, and Armato described a clear cut in Wolf's Run that upset many residents because many of the trees there did not have to be removed. Armato and Collins also discussed a large quantity of new apartments and that the BoS is looking for more green spaces now. Collins asked for a deadline to have tree removal permits done for BoS. Armato stated sometime in September or October when new ordinances are supposed to come to the BoS. Collins asked about differences between policies and ordinances. Armato stated they need to added tree removal permits to the ordinances. Armato asked that Collins send her ideas to him and to Cynthia Kramer for new ordinances. Collins asked if she should be in attendance at planning commission meetings and Armato stated it would be helpful so they can discuss with planning directly about specifications.
- iv.** Collins also stated she would most likely need to ask more questions and would reach out directly to answer them.

##### **b. Tree maintenance issues, construction practices, etc.**

- i.** Collins deferred this topic until the next meeting because she just wanted to discuss these topics openly but there was not a specific situation she wanted to discuss.

##### **c. Police Department Pine Tree**

- i.** Kistler brought this new business up in the meeting and described how the police officers are complaining about pine sap and dirt getting on the police vehicles and their personal vehicles. The police asked Kistler to

bring it to the STC for possible removal of the pine tree. Armato asked for Kistler to show him which tree they are having problems with. Collins suggested moving where they park. Collins agreed to take a look at the tree as well.

**5. Reports**

- a. Board of Supervisors

**6. For the Good of the Order**

- a. Kistler brought up the tree assessment form from the last meeting stating that he added what Collins had asked him to about fungus on the tree. Kistler stated he just needed Collins to sign off on the form stating that she was ok with the layout and there was nothing else to add so that the Parks department can start using the evaluation form for trees.
- b. Armato asked about the resident from the last meeting who wanted to top the pine trees by his house. Kistler explained that Collins had evaluated the trees and thought they were fine but a branch fell from one so Collins went back and reassessed and determined two of the eight that could be removed. Kistler stated the trees mentioned are included in the 150+ list of trees that need to be removed and will be included in the cost assessment for the tree removal bid.
- c. Schaeffer asked about ash trees near her neighborhood and if the township is aware of them. Kistler explained to Schaeffer about what was discussed at the last meeting and that there was an inventory taken of trees in Palmer that needed to be removed. Kistler also assured Schaeffer that if the trees are dead in the right-of-way they are already on the list.
- d. Strasko clarified that all dead trees were in the right of way and explained to Kistler a resident had pointed out a tall dead tree by his property across from the bike path. Strasko wanted to make sure that Kistler and Hilbert were aware of the tree and made sure they knew the location. Collins then asked if they identified dead trees in the parks and Kistler stated they looked in the parks but did not identify many dead trees in the parks.

**7. NEXT MEETING: July 25, 2022**

**8. Adjournment**

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40PM.