

Palmer Township

Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

August 29, 2022, 6:30PM at Palmer Township Municipal Building

1. Roll Call

- a. The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.
- b. Present: Jamie Collins, Patrick Romano, Scott Kistler, Lee Hilbert, Paige Strasko, and Thomas Adams.
- c. Absent: Joseph Armato.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 31, 2022, June 27, 2022, and July 25, 2022.

- a. Hilbert made a motion to approve meeting minutes from May, June, and July. Kistler seconded the motion. All three meeting minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

3. Old Business

- a. **Commonwealth of PA Second Class Township Code**
- b. **Township of Palmer Code of Ordinances**
- c. **Palmer Township Policy and Procedures for trees and sidewalks within township right-of-way**
- d. **Review of proposed acceptable and prohibited tree lists for the Zoning Ordinance and SALDO**
- e. **Does the current tree removal policy/procedure need to be updated to include Shade Tree Commission guidance and or approval for all removal requests?**
- f. **Possibly updating current tree policy to include replanting of street trees that have been removed**
 - i. Collins stated that the old business items rolled into one and that Romano and herself have been meeting to go over ordinances from other townships as well as Palmer's ordinances. Shade Tree Commission (STC) members are actively working on writing new ordinances using examples from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Collins brought up the new zoning ordinance and her thoughts on amendments for street trees in the ordinance. Adams confirmed that Collins would need to contact Cindy Kramer with revision suggestions. Romano and Collins discussed how they will have a complete ordinance once they review their example ordinances. Collins, Adams and Kistler discussed the route to take with submitting ordinances to the Board of Supervisors (BoS), as well as other township employees, to have ordinances enacted. Collins stated she would check in with Kramer and that it would be better to have it complete before submitting it to BoS. Collins also stated that she went over the tree list for SALDO from Kramer as well and will send her revisions.

4. New Business

- a. **Tree removal permits**

- i. Collins, Kistler and Romano discussed the logistics of alerting contractors to upcoming tree removal permits and the logistics of who would oversee tree removal permits and the possibility of needing STC meetings for reviewing permit applications. Collins stated that other townships have landscape architects. Collins pointed out that tree removal permits would need to be discussed more with Armato present for his input.
- b. **Tree maintenance issues, construction practices etc.**
 - i. Collins discussed how she was not aware of anyone from the township that checks tree health during construction and that it was included in many of the ordinances her and Romano were reviewing. Adams, Kistler and Collins discussed examples of contractors/developers removing or cutting down trees or running them over with equipment. Collins also mentioned that she does not look at any planting plans for new construction in the township and she discussed with Kistler and Adams what the township's process is for reviewing planting/landscape plans. The three discussed how Pidcock reviews construction plans as the township engineer and that they should also review the planting plan.
- c. **10 donated trees and 20 grant trees**
 - i. Kistler stated he has not heard any updates from the developer on the 10 donated trees. Collins and Kistler discussed specifics about differences in caliper between trees from the grant and trees donated from the developer. They also discussed which trees Collins thought should be used as street trees or park trees. Collins stated she would also check in with Kramer on the 20 grant trees.
- d. **Village of Mill Race Tree Removal- 21 trees**
 - i. **Approve list of phases for dead trees for removal across Palmer**
 - ii. Kistler explained inventory of dead trees, how Adams had split the township up into 6 phases for tree removal because the project was too large to accomplish in one or two sections. Kistler stated that they were looking for approval on the phase plan and starting to remove trees in the Village of Mill Race.
 - iii. Collins asked about how the phases were broken up and Adams described each phase was focused on one or two neighborhoods around the township to be able to monitor contractors progress and keep disturbance in the township minimal. Collins, Kistler and Adams discussed logistics of how often these removals will happen, where the best phase to start is, safety, and a logical approach to the problem. Collins stated she thought the next removal efforts should be in Old Orchard where trees are larger and a greater danger to residents. Collins also discussed the time aspect of the removals with Kistler. Romano thanked Kistler and Hilbert for their work in Old Orchard after the recent storm.

- iv. Adams stated that he would send Collins a map of the phases across the township, and she can direct the best way to move forward with the phases.
 - v. Kistler explained that Armato promised the residents a letter from the Shade Tree Commission, but Adams had given the contractor for phase one tree removal the ok to move forward without knowing the STC did not send out a letter to the residents yet. Kistler, Adams and Collins discussed the text of a letter to residents explaining the phasing of the tree removal and that there will be no cost to homeowners, the stump will be ground and asking them to water and care for the area after a the tree is removed and a new one is planted. Collins stated she would work on the text of the letter the following day and follow up with Adams, Kistler, Strasko and Armato to have the letter sent out to residents.
 - vi. Romano pointed out that there will generally be a lot of clerical work for committee members in the future and that the mechanics of it needs to be figured out. Collins and Kistler agreed with Romano and Collins pointed out Strasko is there to help but there are logistics to be worked out. She also stated Williams and Armato have assured her she will be compensated for beyond her volunteer duties. Kistler stated the amount of work was not fair to ask of a volunteer and Collins should be appointed the township arborist. Collins and Kistler discussed specifics of work moving forward and compensation.
- e. **Street tree planting at 5 Creek View Ct**
- i. Kistler brought up a resident's proposal for planting two street trees in front of their house that the STC needed to review. Collins, Kistler and Adams discussed photos from the homeowner, how close the trees would be to the streetlight and their mailbox. Kistler stated that Collins should respond to the homeowner's email and give her opinion on where to plant the tree. Kistler stated Williams wants the STC to take the lead on residential problems or proposals like this. Collins mentioned cutting back on planting maples in the township. Romano stated he thought the STC powers should be discussed and spelled out and Collins stated that with the Pennsylvania law gives STC the power over all trees in the township. Romano and Collins discussed educating the residents on the powers of the STC and possibly putting something out on social media.
 - ii. Collins and Kistler also discussed having the township solicitor oversee the ordinances and the tree removal permits to ensure everything is within their power.
- f. **Bamboo disposal- where should residents take bamboo?**
- i. Collins explained how she has bamboo growing in her yard that is a clumping species and does not spread rapidly. Kistler explained that a resident hid bamboo in the yard waste dumpster and contaminated the entire dumpster so that it had to be sent to the landfill. Kistler stated the

township was looking for direction on what to tell residents to do with old/dead bamboo and Collins stated it would take some research to find a solution. Collins asked about talking to the resident who contaminated the dumpster and Adams and Kistler stated she might not want to seek this resident out. Kistler also stated that the township recently enacted an ordinance against planting bamboo but that it also does not tell residents where to dispose of bamboo. Collins stated that they will work on something for recommendations for appropriate disposal. Collins also stated one of the only ways to stop bamboo is to use Roundup multiple times, but Roundup is not ideal to use considering its impact. Collins, Kistler and Hilbert discussed other methods of preventing growth and Collins stated that if Public Works sees any new bamboo plantings to tell the STC and they will write a letter to the resident to remove it before it becomes a problem.

5. Reports

a. Board of Supervisors

- i. Armato was not present to give BoS report.

6. For the Good of the Order

- a. Romano described all the old stumps around his neighborhood and on Old Orchard Dr, and Kistler explained the old policy was to leave the stumps when the township cut a tree and the homeowners were responsible from there. Kistler also explained he wanted to take the new policy back of stump grinding and replanting but it will take time. Collins agreed and brought up other ideas of having homeowners responsible for planting new street trees. Romano asked about land left in Palmer for development and the committee discussed making improvements to other parts of the township and possibly retrofitting areas around the township such as parking lots. Collins pointed out that it was a low priority item on the list right now.
- b. Collins asked Adams about what exhibits he had for the committee, and he described the process of obtaining a subcontractor and that he was not aware of the new process or protocol for removing the street trees. Kistler stated that the same time Adams gets proposals for the next phase is the same time the letter to the residents should be sent out. Adams agreed and explained some residents had planters around the street trees and wanted to remove them. Romano stated that he thought the letter should also nicely let residents know that it is the township's tree and Adams agreed as well. Collins, Adams, Kistler and Romano further discussed what the letter to residents should say and Collins mentioned asking residents to steward the tree and care for it. Adams also mentioned in the past that the township participated in a tree vitalization program and Kistler mentioned it is still an active program. Collins stated that would be a good future project for volunteers, but they need to finish establishing the committee first. Collins reiterated that the township needs a letter from the STC for residents for street tree removal. Kistler also mentioned developing a general mailer down the road for

residents to inform them of the permit process and what the STC goals are, etc. Collins stated getting the word out on social media is important as well. Collins asked if Snowscapes is set to do phase one and Adams stated that they are, and he would like to get started as soon as possible. Kistler stated that everything for the residents needs to come from STC per William's request. Collins finished the meeting by asking Strasko to remind her to write for a post for social media and stating that she and Romano will finalize the ordinances.

7. **NEXT MEETING: September 26, 2022**

8. **Adjournment**

- a. There was a motion to adjourn from Lee Hilbert, and the motion was seconded by Patrick Romano. The motion was passed by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36PM.