

Pennington Borough Shade Tree Committee
Meeting of April 6, 2021 7:30 pm
Via Zoom, Meeting ID:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8705562996?pwd=aHFFQjRYZWFRUFlvckdKTkhDU3lGZz09>

Minutes

Members Present: Chris Brookes, Eileen Heinzel, Kate Fullerton, Mary Wagner, Kati Angarone, Gabe Rosko, Morris Fabian, Liz Semple, and Kate Dunham.

Public Present: Brian Friedrich, Pennington Environmental Commission

Open Public Meeting Statement was read and the meeting was opened.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 2, 2021 meeting were approved with no comments.

Business

Green Week /Seedlings: Mr. Friedrich explained the plans for the Green Week tree planting. It will take place on April 21 at 11am. It will not be open to the general public, but the 3rd grade from Toll Gate will be there. There will be kids from the High School who will be recording the event. The seedlings have been ordered and will be given out to families as school lets out. There is a Green Week event on Saturday April 24 where any remaining seedlings can be given out.

Arbor Day: Toll Gate is ready and fine with the location proposed by Chief Pinelli and Public Works at the southern most tip of the island along Main Street. Ms. Fullerton and Ms. Dunham offered to work on stamping the cookies that Mr. Fabian prepares. The Borough will provide the coloring books and the Proclamation from the Mayor. It is believed that the Mayor knows to attend and say a few words. Mr. Brookes will say a few words.

Trimming and removal report and tree action request: Mr. Fabian reported that there has been no tree pruning so far this year. PSE&G will be trimming trees soon. Public Works has been active with the tree removal as part of the Burd Street project.

Tree Planting Update and Potential Planting Sites: There have been no plantings. The memorial stone has been found and installed for the Coleman Memorial Tree. The location of the Memorial Tree for Bev Willever (request from Kathy Neimeth) has been established. The stone has been ordered. A small group of family and friends will attend the tree planting.

Tree Give-Away: Ms. Fullerton has not been able to speak with Ms. Wolff from FOHVOS. There is no other news to report.

Trifold brochure, Website, and Newsletter: It was noted that Ms. Angarone's piece that she wrote for the newsletter was not included in the most recent newsletter. It will be included in the next newsletter.

It was also noted that Ms. Wagner's efforts on the website have been very successful. The Shade Tree section of the website looks great! Ms. Wagner recommended that members take pictures of trees and tree events and submit them to the Borough, since Ms. Heinzel could use more pictures for the website. It was also strongly recommended that an email contact be added to the website.

Tree Ordinance: Ms. Angarone brought up the idea of initiating a Shade Tree Protection Ordinance, similar to the one Princeton has. Several years ago, this Committee worked on a Shade Tree Protection Ordinance, but Borough Council determined that it was not in the best interest of Borough residents. It was agreed that educating homeowners works better than regulating them in regards to the proper placement and care of their trees. It was noted that this is why we have begun the marketing campaign about the benefits of trees. The unanimous decision was made not to advise Borough Council on a Tree Protection Ordinance.

There was a suggestion for tree goals in the Borough more transparent (Community Forestry Management Plan), as well as an idea of identifying specimen trees – perhaps even making a specimen tree map. If homeowners know where important trees are, we can all work hard to protect them.

Bucket Truck Support Letter: The Committee approved the Support Letter as written. Mr. Brookes will sign it and send it to Ms. Heinzel to distribute to the Borough Council. It looks like the shared agreement with Hopewell Borough may be coming to fruition.

Core Training: Mr. Brookes completed CORE training via Zoom. It was a good course and he highly recommends it to others.

He mentioned that in one of the class modules the distinction between committee and commissions was made, particularly concerning liability to personal lawsuits. Historically, previous Chairs had thought that this group was a commission, but upon investigation a few years ago, it was discovered that it is a committee. Mr. Brookes asked Ms. Semple to check with the Borough Attorney about the exposure committee members have for lawsuits.

It was also mentioned that according to the Shade Tree Ordinance 2018-6, section 13-8, this committee certifies to Borough Council the amount for the tree budget. Mr. Brookes requested that Ms. Semple check with Borough Council to determine whether this is applicable.

It was also suggested that the Shade Tree Committee should meet with other Borough Committees and Commissions, since our work overlaps.

Tree Inventory: Mr. Brookes had nothing new to report.

Council Update – Budget, Burd Street, Pennington Borough Arboretum: Ms. Semple announced that the Shade Tree budget this year will be \$20,000.

There is a plan that during any future street repairs, the cost of tree removals and replanting will be included in the DOT street repair grant.

There was no update on the Aboretum.

The next Shade Tree Committee meeting will be on May 4, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned.