

Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission Meeting

April 10, 2024 - 7 PM EST

Present: Sandy Batty, Dan Amato, Cath Mitchell, Lucas Stelling, Phyllis Deering, Chris Cannon (Council Liaison), Doren Greene, Student Members: Julia Weiner and Kalvin Lee

March Minutes - Passed as Written

Student Liaisons Julia and Kalvin (adjustment to the original agenda due to attendance) – The H.S. environmental club is publicizing a clothing drive happening in town. Julia and Kalvin are working with Cynthia Korman on it. STC discussed publicizing the sapling distribution at the high school. Julia Weiner offered to post a notice on the HS bulletin board, and discuss with the principal to include as part of the communications, as well as referencing as part of the morning announcements. If we get any information from STC member Phyllis, it will be forwarded to Julia and Kalvin for distribution. Sandy will try to get the communication into the Borough blast as well.

Sapling Distribution is scheduled for April 20. Doren is picking up the saplings tomorrow and will hold them for Phyllis.

Arbor Day - Cath Mitchell met with the principal of Wildwood elementary, and Cath mentioned he is receptive to anything we suggest. He will coordinate with the music teacher as well.

Discussed selecting someone for an honorary tree. Lucas submitted a motion to honor Chris Capodanno at Arbor Day with a tree, Doren seconded. All present STC members voted emphatically in favor.

Tree Removal/Replacement Ordinance and Tree Replacement List - Sandy shared extensive comments about the ordinance provided by Brian Marshall. Sandy sent the comments to the Borough Council. Ordinance is supposed to be discussed on April 24, 2024. There will need to be two readings, the first for introduction and the second is for public comment.

Sandy attended the third session of the webinars about the ordinance. This session was about enforcement. Sandy said she would distribute the materials and recording of the session for everyone to review.

Sandy asked Chris Cannon if the ordinance was discussed at the last Borough Council meeting and he said it had not been, but the Council had discussed the ordinance previously. They're waiting on the recommendation on the tree list from the STC, but are otherwise happy with the progress and timeline.

Presentation to Borough Council - Sandy shared that STC is on the April 24, 2024 meeting agenda for our presentation. STC discussed timing for completion of the materials to be included in the session. Sandy will follow up on that. Sandy mentioned that she will delete some of the content about the setbacks. STC discussed leaving discussion of the front yard setback because this area can have trees that mostly impact the public roads.

Sandy would like to include a preamble about what the STC does, a bit about the shade tree law, to add context to the presentation. Sandy will refine the presentation and send to Lucas for review.

Sandy mentioned that STC member CEUs are current, but a member of the DPW will also need to attend core training to ensure Mountain Lakes continues to be accredited.

Tree Inspections / Briefing on Mushrooms and Other Growths on Trees - A tree came down on Morris Ave. This was a flagged tree by STC member Lucas due to fungal growth on the tree. As a result, Lucas is going to work on pulling together a presentation about mushrooms and fungi so we are all better educated. The risk is that mushrooms and fungi are a symptom of tree rot and they can act fast to further damage a tree.

Doren suggested adding pictures to the website so that concerned homeowners could identify/know what to look for.

Meeting on Mountain Lakes Conformance with Highlands Regional Master Plan - Cath and Lucas expressed an interest in attending the Zoom meeting on April 22. Doren expressed an interest as a member of the Woodlands committee. Sandy will forward the information along.

Liaison Reports -

Environmental Commission - No representatives present

Woodlands - Doren shared that Woodlands is working on identifying trees that need to be taken down in the woodlands. The Woodlands Committee is also working on Borough clean up on April 20th.

Other Business - STC discussed the updated ordinance and how utilities may be bound by the existing wording as well. Sandy will raise this up with the Council

Meeting concluded at 7:52 PM EST

Minutes taken by Dan Amato