

Franklin Township Shade Tree Commission (FTSTC)
Somerset County, New Jersey
Minutes of November 17, 2022

Present: Conner Ferretti, Stephen Gillooly, Robert Hudak, Sara Malone, Ellen Thompson,
James Vassanella

Excused: Mary Lauko

Absent: Arnold Schmidt

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.
2. Secretary's Report – S. Malone motioned to accept the draft October Minutes as written; S. Gillooly seconded. Motion passed. Minutes were approved as written.
3. Treasurer's Report – A \$1,710.00 reimbursement came into the Tree Planting Fund since the prior month for an ending balance of \$306,161.58. There were no changes to Shade Tree Other Expenses. No action required.

First Opening of Meeting to the Public – None present.

Old Business

1. Commission Requirements
 - a. The previous meeting's length of 2.5 hours shall be included on Members' 2022 Volunteer Hours Summary Sheets.
 - b. U&CFM Plan – No updates.
 - c. Grants – Nothing new to report.
 - d. Report to Council – S. Malone presented a rough draft of FTSTC activities over the past year including background of the mission, goals and minimum requirements for the Township to be in good standing with the NJ Urban & Community Forestry Management Program and the Arbor Day Foundation/Tree City USA, as well as 2022 accomplishments to date.
2. Tree Plantings / Projects / Maintenance
 - a. S. Malone proposed that in January, when FTSTC considers its obligations for 2023, in order to be more effective as a shade tree commission it advisable to select projects that would benefit from having an arborist's collaboration, e.g., those involving planting plans and how they might jibe with the Sustainable Jersey Local Health Assessment, updates on the hazardous tree assessment, and grant-writing.
 - b. Memorial Forest – Open Space Advisory Committee is going forward with its planting plan(s). S. Malone will forward M. Lauko's email on tree diversity.
 - c. Hamilton Street Redevelopment planting – V. Dominach is looking forward to spring planting.
 - d. Maintenance of Recent and Ongoing Projects – No updates.

3. Public Information / Education / Events / Community Outreach Projects
 - a. Public Inquiries / Tree Concern Reporting Process – None.
 - b. Website updates – S. Malone submitted two draft articles. She will continue to work with IT to make sure that the Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) is replaced and that a link from the FTSTC page to the SDL Portal is included.
 - c. Franklin Times and NIXLE e-blasts – Potential topics include the Salem Oak, the tree sale (if it is to be held) and the open position on the Commission.
 - d. S. Gillooly reported that no local towns do similar programs of selling trees. Baumley Nursery offered to “bundle” FTSTC trees for the tree sale with one of their orders. Approximately forty trees will be ordered - three different species – with a budget of \$2,500. Also discussed was what to do with leftover trees, and where Department of Public Works (DPW) can plant them to ensure their survivability. S. Gillooly made a motion to continue with the 2023 tree, contingent on obtaining further information; FTSTC will begin taking checks for tree orders in March; checks will not be deposited until trees are picked up. S. Malone seconded. Motion passed.
4. Initiatives / Projects
 - a. Landscape Guidelines for Development Applications
 - i. Recommended Trees List – M. Lauko updated the Do Not Plant Trees List and the Recommended Trees List. S. Malone made a motion to accept the current draft Recommended Trees List. E. Thompson seconded. Motion passed. M. Lauko and S. Malone will continue to flesh out the list then push it out in January. The list will be sent to the Planning & Zoning Department, DPW and the Engineering Department. It will appear in the spring issue of the Franklin Times and be included on the Township website. The next area of focus will be conifers.
 - b. Joint Subcommittee of EC, OSAC, FTSTC
 - i. Franklin Township Tree Removal Ordinance – In light of the Planning Board having recently approved raising the tree removal fee to \$300.00, J. Vassanella emailed R. Vornlocker to inquire what the next steps would be to affect the increase and what is involved in changing the relevant ordinance. Tara Kenyon, Land Preservation and Management Consultant, is working on revising the ordinance and will draft the text. S. Gillooly volunteered to participate in the joint subcommittee, and we anticipate that M. Lauko will also monitor progress as the OSAC Liaison to the STC.
 - c. iTree Canopy Cover – This will be useful for determining tree calculations and go towards obtaining Sustainable Jersey Action Points. T. Kenyon asked for the calculations for the purpose of writing the tree ordinance.
 - d. CME Hazardous Tree Assessments Maps and Inventory – No updates.

New Business

1. S. Gillooly is preparing a letter to R. Vornlocker about how to improve communication and coordination with relevant Township departments. Discussion led to merging this list of concerns with the Report to the Council as opportunities for addressing ongoing challenges. S. Malone will prepare the draft Report to Council incorporating comments from S. Gillooly and R. Hudak’s draft letter.
2. 2023 Meeting Schedule – Will be published in the Courier News, Home News Tribune, and the Franklin Reporter & Advocate. S. Malone made a motion to accept the 2023 Meeting Schedule as written; S. Gillooly seconded. Motion passed.

Second Opening of Meeting to the Public – None present.

Dendrology – S. Gillooly reported that Manville got a \$10,000.00 grant to replant trees lost during Hurricane Ida, in the Royce Brook flood plain.

Adjournment – C. Ferretti motioned to adjourn the meeting; S. Gillooly seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Thompson, Secretary