

**Franklin Township Shade Tree Commission**  
**Somerset County, New Jersey**  
**Minutes of January 26, 2023**

Present: Sara Malone, Conner Ferretti, Stephen Gillooly, Robert Hudak, Mary Lauko Arnold Schmidt, Ellen Thompson, James Vassanella

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.
2. Reorganization of Committee
  - a. S. Malone made a motion to nominate S. Gillooly for Chair; E. Thompson seconded. Nomination approved.
  - b. S. Gillooly made a motion to nominate M. Lauko for Vice Chair; A. Schmidt seconded. Nomination approved.
  - c. S. Malone made a motion to nominate E. Thompson for Secretary; A. Schmidt seconded. Nomination approved.
3. Secretary's Report – S. Malone motioned to approve the November 2022 Minutes as written. A. Schmidt seconded. Minutes approved as written.
4. Treasurer's Report – S. Malone presented the financial report, indicating that two reimbursement - \$2,820.00 and \$3,960 - came into the Tree Planting (Fund 12) last month for an ending balance of \$366,941.58. There was one change to Shade Tree Other Expenses (Fund 01) - \$399.50 for equipment – for an ending balance of \$350.50. No action required.
5. First Opening of the Meeting to the Public – R. Hudak motioned to open the meeting to the public. A. Schmidt seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was open to the public. In attendance was potential new Commission Member, Kamla J. Sharma, 20 Academy Road, who reported having lost approximately 38 trees at that address. K. Sharma related his collaborative efforts with the Indian Supreme Court toward planting 10,000 trees and expressed his enthusiasm for finding ways to encourage tree plantings within the Township. M. Lauko motioned to close the meeting to the public. A. Schmidt seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was closed to the public.

**Old Business**

1. Commission Status
  - a. Volunteer Hours - S. Malone reported that the Commission accumulated 607.25 volunteer hours in 2022, which is valued at \$18,741.14 using the National Value of Volunteer Time from IndependentSector.org. This data will be used in reports to the State and Tree City USA and for any future grant applications.
  - b. U&CFM Plan – Nothing to report.
  - c. Grants / Open Space Advisory Commission
    - i. Sustainable Jersey/Local Health Assessment – Liaison, M. Lauko, reported that Open Space Consultant, Tara Kenyon, has received all the data, that all focus group meetings were held and that the project will begin in May. Ideas being considered include trails mapping in one of the parks and cleaning up the



- ii. Recommended Trees List – S. Malone submitted the draft list to several subject matter experts for their review and comments. In the interest of diversity and because there is no way of knowing what trees may survive in the future, it was advised that no more than 5-10% of any one genus be promoted for use within the Township. She will incorporate their comments and recirculate the list to the Commission. M. Lauko will give the updated list to Open Space. J. Vassanella recommended distributing the list to the media.
- b. Joint Subcommittee of EC, OS, FTSTC – A. Schmidt reported on an email the EC sent to Township Manager, R. Vornlocker, on December 9<sup>th</sup> which recommends revising the definition of [“Tree, Trees” \(§222-2\)](#) because as now written it allows for the removal of trees that are important, useful, and worth preserving and/or replacing as part of development activity. The proposed text reads, “For the purpose of this ordinance a tree shall be defined as a woody (barked), stemmed, perennial plant that is at least 6 feet tall and/or is 2.5” or more in diameter at three feet above the base of the trunk.” Additionally, EC recommends restoring language to [§ 222-5.3 Tree replacement; contributions to Tree Fund](#): “No more than 25% of tree replacement may be by way of contribution.” This text had been removed from the currently approved Ordinance.
- c. iTree Canopy Cover – No updates.
- d. CME Hazardous Tree Assessment Maps and Inventory – No updates.

### **New Business**

1. NJ Tree Recovery Campaign – It was agreed to order 300 trees for distribution at the April 28, 2023 Arbor Day celebration. R. Hudak and M. Lauko will pick up the trees.
2. R. Hudak read a statement that would reintroduce the Commission to the Township Council. S. Gillooly encouraged that it form the basis of a preamble to the Report to the Council.

**Second Opening of the Meeting to the Public** – No public in attendance.

**Dendrology** – none

**Adjournment** – M. Lauko made a motion to adjourn; E. Thompson seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Thompson, Secretary