

**Franklin Township Shade Tree Commission**  
**Somerset County, New Jersey**  
**Minutes of April 27, 2023**

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

Excused: James Vassanella

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.
2. Secretary's Report – S. Malone and M. Lauko proposed changes to the March Minutes. S. Malone motioned to approve the March Minutes as amended; M. Lauko seconded. Minutes approved as amended.
3. Treasurer's Report – S. Malone presented the financial report, indicating that since the prior report, two reimbursements totaling \$12,270.00 were received for the Tree Planting (12) fund, and one dispersal of \$610.00 for the Arbor Day tree was made from that account. There was no change to the "Other Expenses (01) fund. New account balances are: Tree Planting Fund: \$392,851.58; Other Expenses Fund: \$100.00. No action required.
4. Commission administration – S. Malone received 4 CEUs for attending online i-Tree Canopy training. M. Lauko received one CEU for attending a seminar.
5. First Opening of the Meeting to the Public – S. Malone motioned to open the meeting to the public; M. Lauko seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was opened to the public. In attendance was Bill Bowman, reporter with the Franklin Reporter & Advocate who had no comments. S. Malone motioned to close the meeting to the public; E. Thompson seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was closed to the public.
6. S. Gillooly announced that the Arbor Day Proclamation was adopted at the most recent Township Council Meeting. In addition, the Commission received stickers for 21 years' membership in Tree City USA. C. Ferretti will post them on two different street signs in the Township.

**Old Business**

1. Updates from Committees and Commissions
  - a. FTSTC Report to Council – no updates.
  - b. Environmental Commission (EC) – A. Schmidt reported that he met with T. Kenyon and R. Puskas to formalize Memorial Forest plans. They identified potential parking areas. A large open space in the back was identified for planting trees, parking and possibly a trail to Elizabeth Avenue. A new wooden sign will be installed out front. Also discussed was the possibility of paying DPW to plant the trees in Memorial Forest that people purchase for this purpose and whether FTSTC Tree Fund monies could be used to cover DPW cost. R. Hudak proposed making bare root trees available as a lower cost alternative to balled and burlapped (B & B) and/or the option of adopting a tree to care for trees already planted. Department of Public Works (DPW) has cleared the roadway all the way to the back and around trees. Some trees have died and need to

- be removed. C. Ferretti discussed various logistical issues related to getting water to the proposed planting area via rain barrels or water trucks, etc.
- c. Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) – M. Lauko and S. Malone reviewed the Memorial Forest Recommended tree list and M. Lauko sent it to T. Kenyon.
  - d. Sustainable Jersey – no updates.
  - e. DPW – Township Council Members Ed Potosnak and J. Vassanella are scheduled to attend Arbor Day celebration. C. Ferretti shared that the tree – an American hornbeam *Carpinus caroliniana* - will be planted in one of the islands right in front of the high school building. The event will take place rain or shine but C. Ferretti explained that if it is pouring rain, the bucket truck will not be there, however, the chipper truck will be there either way. He went into detail about the preparation of the planting hole, how the hole will be safeguarded and the hours during which he would be available. He cautioned that it will be necessary for DPW to review the tree planting ordinance in order to determine who has jurisdiction in the event of more plantings on Board of Education (BoE) properties. S. Gillooly indicated that the school district still wants more trees, e.g., on the Consolata property and that it will be necessary to clarify which entity will assume responsibility [for care and maintenance of the trees]. Further, that perhaps the ordinance can be modified or another way can be found to accommodate planting at BoE sites. More details are needed on the program of tree maintenance in the Township, what the existing plan is, etc. C. Ferretti explained that it is inconsistent and mostly in response to [resident] complaints. S. Gillooly reiterated that under the new State requirement, the Stormwater Management Plan requires towns to have a tree replacement and maintenance plan from a stormwater maintenance perspective.

## 2. Planning

- a. Franklin Township Urban and Community Forestry Management Plan (U&CFMP) – FTSTC is not eligible for funding to pay for a consultant to write the revised U&CFMP because funding is available only for initial plans. That original cost was \$10,000.00. Shade Tree Fund monies can be used for writing the revision. It might be possible to obtain a proposal from the State forester. Whomever is selected to write a plan – a Certified Tree Expert (CTE) - must be qualified to write a plan. Dominic Pensabene, CME Associates, might be available to do it or provide a referral. It may not be necessary to put the contract out for bid.
- b. Landscape Guidelines for Development Applications
  - i. Recommended deciduous trees list – S. Malone reported that the deciduous trees list is done and ready to post to the Township website. Once it is on the website, it can go out as a NIXEL e-blast. It was sent to Planning Director/Senior Zoning Officer, M. Healey, DPW, EC and Township Manager, R. Vornlocker. S. Malone requested that each entity distribute the list to personnel and members and that M. Healey provide the list to contractors.
  - ii. M. Lauko suggested that the next list be called “Evergreen Trees”, rather than “Conifers” because it will include non-coniferous trees such as hollies //ex.
  - iii. Hazardous Tree Maps / Inventory – no updates.

3. Tree Maintenance and Projects

- a. Planting Trees, Watering, and Maintenance by DPW – S. Gillooly contacted DPW Manager, C. Hauck, about the Department’s potential plans for this summer and has yet to receive a response. S. Gillooly will have the opportunity to discuss these concerns when Councilman Vassanella presents the FTSTC Report to Council at a future Township Council Meeting.
- b. Hamilton Street – no updates.
- c. JFK Blvd. Tree Survey – C. Ferretti forwarded R. Hudak’s email about meeting for the survey to Parks Foreman Gregory Pinheiro. To date, he has not received a response. R. Hudak will contact G. Pinheiro directly. S. Gillooly recommended not waiting for D. Pensabene to be available if R. Hudak can make arrangements with G. Pinheiro.

4. Public Information / Education / Events / Community Outreach Projects

- a. Arbor Day 2023 / Proclamation – The Arbor Day Event information has been included on the FTSTC web page. Activities for the day include the tree planting and reading of the proclamation. S. Malone showed the tri-fold poster she and M. Lauko revised which will be on display.
- b. Big and Heritage Trees in Franklin Township - At the Arbor Day event, FTSTC will provide information regarding the NJDEP Big and Heritage Trees of New Jersey program. S. Gillooly has invited the Girl Scouts to visit the FTSTC table to learn about the program which they have elected to participate in as a badge project. Initially, the Girl Scouts will work with the list of Township legacy trees (c.2008) . They will locate and collect data for each tree on the list including gps location, measurements, and observed condition. They can then help identify new trees to add to the list. FTSTC will obtain requisite permissions to access the trees, include them on the Township’s list and to share the information with the NJDEP’s program.
- c. Franklin Times and NIXLE e-blasts – Ideas for articles include the need for two new Commission Members and the Big and Heritage Trees list.
- d. Annual Tree Sale 2024 – Will discuss at May meeting.
- e. Franklin Day 2023 – Will be held on September 23.

**New Business** – Members were reminded to submit their Financial Disclosure Statements by the April 30, 2023 statutory deadline.

**Second Opening of the Meeting to the Public** – S. Malone made a motion to open the meeting to the public; A. Schmidt seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was opened to the public. Bill Bowman respectfully declined input. S. Malone made a motion to close the meeting to the public; S. Gillooly seconded. Motion passed and the meeting was closed to the public.

**Dendrology** – None.

**Adjournment** – S. Malone made a motion to adjourn; M. Lauko seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Thompson, Secretary