

Upper Merion Shade Tree Commission Meeting

7-20-16

Attending: Bob Dempsey, Ann Marchino, Jerome Ocker (chair), Barley Van Clief.
Bill Schutter (Staff liaison)

Meeting called to order: 7:02PM

OLD BUSINESS

- Report from Park & Recreation Committee meeting: Mr. Dempsey reported that the Master Plan is finished and ready to be submitted to the Supervisors. The first priority for implementation will be projects at Heuser Park, including new athletic fields and work on the scenic pond.
- Working goats at Bob White Park: The fenced in area that where the goats are located is fairly large, so it is difficult to see changes in the vegetation on a day-to-day basis. The group contemplated whether the goats would selectively eat their favorite plants before tackling the less tasty ones, rather than clearing one patch completely before moving on to the next section.
- Volunteer Day at White Gate Park: Ms. Van Clief coordinated a tree care volunteer day at White Gate Park in June. A group of 10 volunteers from Glaxo Smith Kline in Colledgeville worked for 4 hours to weed, mulch, re-stake and prune the trees that were planted there 3 seasons ago. There are several trees that need to be replaced.
- The Emerald Ash Borer treatment injections on 14 Township park trees were completed. Since each treatment is good for several years, the injections will be rotated among important ash trees in the parks. For 2016, the following trees were treated: Sweetbriar Park (2 trees); Tabak Park (3 trees); Volpi Commons (4 trees); Walker Park (4 trees); Valley Forge Acres (1 tree).
- Board of Community Assistance grant: The Upper Merion Tree Tenders received two grants for a total of \$2,500. In order to accomplish the most important tree work with these funds, we requested that the two grants be combined so that we could remove the two very large, dead Norway Maples along the driveway at Township Building Park. This work was completed, leaving some additional funds that will be used to purchase trees to shade benches to be installed on the new Valley Forge Connector Trail. These trees will be planted by volunteers on Saturday, November 19 – all Township residents are invited/encouraged to participate.
- Beautification Awards: All winning properties have been submitted and owners notified. Mr. Herbert and his staff are in the process of filming them for the awards presentation in September.

- Tree City USA: Ms. Marchino and Ms. Van Clief attended the presentation of Upper Merion's 2016 Tree City USA Award, presented by DCNR Service Forester Heather Kerr. Upper Merion is one of only 16 municipalities that have held the award without interruption for 40 straight years.

NEW BUSINESS

- Trees for Valley Forge Connector Trail: As per item #5 above, the STC voted to purchase and plant trees to shade the benches on the new trail. The group discussed various topics related to the long-term planning for the trail: maintenance issues (60" decks on the Township's mowers); dead and dying trees along the trail; the threat from Emerald Ash Borer infestation. This will be a continuing conversation for future meetings and an opportunity to partner with the Parks and Recreation Board.
- Educational Video Series: Topic ideas were presented for the tree-related video series that Mr. Herbert has proposed for the closed-circuit TV channel. They include:
 - Mulching
 - How to Plant container trees/bare root trees/B&B trees
 - Ten Best Trees for Upper Merion Township
 - Emerald Ash Borer (Ms. Van Clief has asked Dr. Don Eggen to consult)
 - Proper Pruning cuts
 - Watering guidelines for young trees
- Community Center plantings: Concern was expressed that many of the plants have been placed too close together.

OTHER BUSINESS

Other topics briefly discussed were:

- Ash trees along the new trail
- Funding for ongoing tree maintenance: The question was raised how the Township can manage to continue to complete critical tree work. Can there be a budget line item, for example. This is a topic for ongoing discussion.

Next meeting: September 21, 2016, 7:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.