

## Upper Merion Shade Tree Commission Minutes

11-16-16

Attending: Ann Marchino, Jerome Ocker (chair), Michael Sullivan, Barley Van Clief, Bill Schutter (Staff liaison), Erika Spott (Board liaison).

Meeting called to order: 7:07 PM.

### OLD BUSINESS

- Volunteer luncheon: Ms. Marchino, Ms. Van Clief and Mr. Ocker attended the Township's Volunteer Board luncheon on 11-6-16. They expressed appreciation to Ms. Spott for the recognition she gave to the Shade Tree Commission during the ceremony.
- Working goats at Bob White Park: The goats have finished their work for this year. The project has been deemed a success, since the goats ate virtually all the invasive plants except for the White Snakeroot, which is toxic to them. Mr. Schutter indicated that the goats will be employed again next season.
- Ash tree Update: Several experts have been enlisted to evaluate the ash trees along the Valley Forge Connector trail: Richard Hartlieb (Assistant District Forester, DCNR Bureau of Forestry); Heather Kerr (Service Forester, DCNR Bureau of Forestry); and Donald Eggen, PhD (Forest Pest Manager, DCNR Bureau of Forestry). They determined that approximately 60-90% of the trees lining the trail are ash and will be decimated by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Dr. Eggen presented the findings to the Board of Supervisors, recommending that a consulting forester be recruited to create a forest management plan, including treatment or removal of ash trees while they still have value as well as a plan for reforestation. The plan will enable the Township to apply for state funding. From the Bureau of Forestry list of approved consultants, Jacob Schultz (Shultz Forest Management and Consulting) was chosen to provide a proposal.
- Board of Community Assistance grant: Because of the potential that trees will be removed from the Valley Forge connector trail, it was decided that the remaining funds from the BCA will be used to plant bare root trees in Heuser Park and Whitegate Park on November 19, 2016, rather than along the trail. Installation of the benches has also been postponed. The Parks and Recreation Board is working together with the Shade Tree Commission until the EAB issue is resolved.
- Citizens Board Breakfast Report: Ms. Marchino attended the breakfast and reported on past and upcoming activities of the Shade Tree Commission.
- Educational Video Series Update: Don Herbert has completed a recording of Dr. Don Eggen speaking about the threat of Emerald Ash Borer. The recording will be aired on the Township's closed circuit station. Mr. Herbert will be invited to an upcoming meeting to plan out future programming.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Community Center plantings: Mr. Ocker visited the new Community Center, spoke with the landscape contractor and devised an alternate planting plan that eliminates conflict between the utility lines and large maturing trees. He also recommended moving some plants for better spacing and to prevent disease. The Commission members expressed concern that they do not know whether the recommendations included in plan reviews are actually implemented. Ms. Spott will bring the topic up in a future Supervisors' meeting.
- Belmont School trees: A resident has contacted the STC about the recent removal of trees at the Belmont School, asking about the potential for replacement. Mr. Schutter indicated that the trees were removed by the School District and thus replacement would be the responsibility of the School District. Ms. Van Clief will send this information to the resident.
- Tree Planting: The Fall 2016 tree planting event will happen on Saturday, November 19. Ms. Van Clief has advertised for volunteers to meet at Heuser Park at 9 AM. Of the 21 trees, 14 will be planted at Heuser Park and 7 at Whitegate. Many of the trees will replace those which have died recently.
- Resignation: Mr. Sullivan indicated that he will be formally resigning from the STC this month, citing health reasons. The STC members all wished him well and thanked him for his valuable service. When possible, Mr. Sullivan will attend future meetings as a citizen. Thought will be given to Mr. Sullivan's replacement.
- Plan reviews: Plans for Caley Elementary School and Gulph Elementary School were reviewed.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Other topics briefly discussed:

- Tree sale for spring, 2017. Applications will be available for residents to acquire a subsidized front yard tree. The application will be ready in late January and the trees will be distributed on April 22, 2017.
- Reorganization will happen at the next meeting.

Next meeting: January 18, 2017, 7:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.