

Upper Merion Shade Tree Commission Meeting
11-19-14

Attending: Bob Dempsey, Ann Marchino (Chair), Jerome Ocher, Mike Sullivan, Barley Van Clief, Bill Schutter (Staff liaison), Susan Ridgeway (Upper Merion Tree Tenders Leader).

1. Meeting called to order: 7:05 PM

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Beautification Awards: Ms. Marchino presented the awards for the front and back yards, and the Distinguished Tree Award on September 18. The STC suggests that in future years, the video of the awarded yards and tree be shown prior to the presentation of the awards. That way, the audience will see the reason for the awards and have an appreciation for the recipients' efforts.
3. Pruning Workshop: Several people have mentioned that they have seen the recording of the pruning workshop on HGTV. The workshop and work sessions were very successful – several suggestions were made for improvements. It was decided that we will repeat the workshop and work session at Heuser Park, using the community room, in June, July or August of 2015.
4. Fall Tree Planting Wrap-Up:
 - A total of 32 trees were planted in Whitegate Park with the help of 43 community volunteers, including members of the Upper Merion High School CAST group, King of Prussia Rotary, and Girl Scout Troop 7157. In addition, three bald cypress trees were planted in Heuser Park, in wet locations in hopes that they can survive the conditions. Funding for these trees was provided through an Upper Merion Community Assistance grant and the UM Parks & Recreation budget.
 - Fourteen trees were purchased by UM residents, to be planted in front yards. These residents each received a demonstration of proper bare root tree planting technique.
5. Tree grants:
 - Both of the PA Community Trees grants have now been completed: All trees have been planted and inspected. A series of tree-related reference books have been donated to the Upper Merion Library for resident use. All inventoried trees have been entered into the i-Tree database.
 - The Upper Merion Tree Tenders, under the guidance of Susan Ridgeway, will once again be applying for a grant from the Upper Merion Community Assistance program. If received, the funds will be used to purchase trees for a fall planting.

NEW BUSINESS:

6. Report from Park & Recreation Committee meeting: Mr. Dempsey has attended several planning meetings of the P&R Board subcommittee on park master planning. He reported that there will be a survey of residents to determine what the community wants for their parks. Heuser and Township Parks are the most widely used parks. At future meetings of the Parks & Recreation Committee, Mr. Dempsey and Mr. Schutter will ask if any of the 33 township parks are in need of trees, for possible future plantings.
7. Emerald Ash Borer treatment funding: In order to qualify for this funding, the Township would need to have a completed EAB management plan. To begin this process, the STC will begin to identify where in township parks ash trees are located, during April or May, 2015 when the trees are leafed out. Meanwhile, the largest ash trees inventoried in Executive Estates Park have received initial treatments, applied by Davey Tree Experts.
8. Bark protection: Most of the newly planted trees have had bark protectors installed against deer rub. Davey Tree Experts has donated additional protectors to the Township, which will be installed on the remaining trees and reserved for future plantings.
9. Tree planting/inventory events for 2015: The STC will visit parks during the summer to identify potential planting and inventory locations – information to be added to the suggestions from the Parks & Recreation Committee. Possible sites discussed included Tabac and Sweetbriar Parks. Interest was expressed at the recent planting event to inventory and plant at Bob White Park, where much winter damage was incurred this past winter. The new Community Center will also need trees when construction is completed. There are plans being considered for a trail to connect Volpe Commons with the Center, which could take trees as well.
10. Next meeting: January 21, 2015 at 7 PM.
11. Meeting adjourned: 8:04 PM.