

**Borough of Phoenixville
Shade Tree Commission
Meeting Agenda/Minutes
January 11, 2010**

Start Time: 6:40 PM

End Time: 7:45 PM

Attendance: Commission members: Joan McCracken, Tracy Lee Tackett, Paul Kusko. Borough Staff: Melissa Gibbons, Recreation Director, Steven Nease, Finance Director. Tree Commission Volunteers: John Westerman

Public Comment: No members of the public in attendance.

Guest Resource:

None scheduled

Minutes Review: Meeting of December 14, 2009: Minutes were approved as presented.

Shade Tree Service Requests:

See Attached Inspection List: (None scheduled for the period)

Phone/email requests: One inquiry was received and it was determined to be a Schuylkill Township issue.

Follow-ups:

Completed work orders: To date the Commission has not received work orders from Oct 22 through Dec 31.

Tree service schedule: No activity

Plantings:

Plantings

- ❖ Friendship Field: 2010 PennVest Stimulus Tree Grant: We were informed that we are getting the PennVest grant of 100 trees. Response on tree information is due January 22. Mr. Kusko to respond.
- ❖ TreeVitalize: 2010 Bare root trees: Tree orders for up to 40 trees are now available for \$35.00 per tree. Due date for orders is Jan 29.
- ❖ Tree storage area: No report.

Violations:

Borough Manager's email of 11/20/2009: Mr. Krack directed the Commission to copy the Boro Codes Officer on all recommendations regarding Code Violations.

Old Business:

- 1) **Budget/Policy Direction for 2010:** Jean Krack, Borough Manager **Report:** Mr. Krack was unable to attend. Mr. Nease provided some information relative to the Borough's policy direction for 2010. The money in the 2010 tree budget (not budgeted funds) is to attend to the backlog of service requests accumulated through 8/30/2009 plus emergency work that should arise. The idea is to consider street trees in the same manner as curbs, sidewalks, and other structures in the Right-of-Way (RW). These items are property owner responsibilities. Cost of maintenance is born by the property owner. The Borough cannot afford to maintain street trees without a tax increase, possible 6%.
Regarding requests post 8/30/09 & procedure for 2010: Borough Staff (Nease & Gibbons) will draft a response letter to send to each resident requesting tree service post 8/30/09 notifying them that the request was received, what will or will not happen and why. Brian Watson is responsible for assigning and overseeing the tree work and will decide emergency work and if a tree not on the backlog list receives service. Borough staff will instruct office & service window staff on how to respond to new tree service requests. The Tree Commission will only be looking at those requests that may be deemed a hazard/threat and will not otherwise respond to new requests for service, nor add new requests to the Tree Service Data Base. **Role of Tree Commission:** Mr. Nease stated that The Commission should write the Ordinance language to regulate planting, maintenance, and removal of trees in the RW. Review tree ordinances from municipalities where property owners have the maintenance responsibilities. Should be doable in 6 months. The Commission would function similar to the Historic Area Review Board and provide guidelines as to what the property owner can and cannot do with their trees in a RW. **Q & A:** Mr. Kusko Asked – "Who owns the trees?" Mr. Nease did not have an answer to that question, but stated that the Borough is not abandoning the trees. That money will be budgeted for planting trees and Tree Commission work. All policy/ordinance changes will be vetted by the Borough's legal counsel. Ms. McCracken asked about enforcement & Fines? Mr. Nease stated that the Borough made changes in the Codes Department. Codes will need to be involved in any tree ordinance fines, fees, requirements for property owners and tree contractors. Ms McCracken stated that tree contractors should be regulated and that when a tree is removed, a replacement tree must be planted.
- 2) **TAC Staff liaison for 2010:** Our Staff Liaison, Mr. Cowan, is no longer employed by the Borough. Mr. Nease stated that Mr. Watson or Melissa Gibbons would probably be assigned.
- 3)
- 4) **Annual Report (2009) to Council: Kusko:** Mr. Kusko stated he was not going to present a report to Council until he got all of the tree work orders for 2009 and Mr. Krack met with the Commission members about policy changes for 2010.
- 5) Reeves Park: (no report)
- 6) Memorial Trees (no action)
- 7) Web site update – Kusko: Mr. Kusko reported that he had submitted minutes for the 4th quarter of 2009 and annual reports for previous years to be posted upon the Borough's web site per Mr. Krack's request.
- 8)
- 9)

New Business:

- 1.) None presented.
- 2.)

Submitted by: Paul Kusko, TAC Chairman