

Borough of Phoenixville

Tree Advisory Commission

August 9, 2010

Start Time: 6:36 pm

Attendance: Commissioners - Paul Kusko, Joan McCracken, Randy Morin Staff Liaison -Melissa Gibbons, Dir. Parks & Recreation Dept. Tree Commission Volunteer - John Westerman

Public Comment

Chairman Kusko addressed the public and explained the budget issues that the Borough is facing. Mr. Kusko stated that all areas of the budget are subject to review including the Tree Commission budget with the possibility of shifting maintenance responsibilities of the Borough trees to abutting property owners, and he also described the role of the Commission in the review process.

General Comments:

- Tenley Gubonich, 1213 Monroe Ave. – repeated sewer line backup due to tree roots; she wants to have tree removed but the borough owns it. Commission recommends that she fill out a service request form describing her problems.
- Ed Wanders, 1215 Monroe Ave. – 22 year resident; tree is causing him a lot of financial distress; wants to remove tree. His 2009 removal request was denied.
- Tim Wilks, 411 Carlisle Ave. - visited by tree commission at 11-9-09; commission recommended an elevation trim and trim back from house; he is worried about having to pay for the tree work if it doesn't get completed in 2010.
- Pamela Dunn, 4 Richards Lane – tree was planted by the Borough and it is now dead; Tree Commission recommends that she can remove-the tree.
- Bob Nieman, 421 Starr St. – 52 year resident; large sycamore roots are lifting his driveway entrance; also has had sewer and sidewalk problems; the Tree Commission has denied a previous requests (2009) for Borough to repair his drive way entrance. The Tree Commission recommends that he appeal his request in writing to-the Borough manager about repairing the driveway entrance.
- Zack Delay, 317 Marshall (corner of Marshall and Emmitt) – big pin oak and big maple; sewer problems and sidewalk problems; also a new tree (planted in 2009) on Emmett is blocking driver's vision of the road at Marshall & Emmett; he also suggested that no new trees should be planted since the borough can't maintain the trees it is already in charge of.
- Jean Marie Baldwin, 1212 Monroe – Likes her tree and it was recently trimmed but tree is pushing up sidewalk; she is concerned about liability if someone would trip and get hurt on the sidewalk; she is also concerned about potential sewer hazards after hearing her about neighbors problems; also supports the Borough continuing the maintain the trees.

Comments regarding Possible Change in Custody of Borough Tree Ordinance:

- Bob Pingitore, 850 S. Main St. – does not support the idea of changing the Borough street tree ordinance; London Plane issue (on 200 block of Virginia Ave.)(e.g. These trees are sick and will eventually die); these trees should be ‘grandfathered’ in and remain Borough responsibility even if the ordinance is changed
- Nick Nauta, 335 2nd Ave. – does not support the idea of changing the Borough street trees ordinance; adds financial strain and encourages poor maintenance; has volunteered in the past as a Tree Tender and supports the Tree Commission program.
- Patricia Nauta, 335 2nd Ave. – in favor of keeping the Tree Commission regulating the street trees; concerned about how homeowners tend their own trees (eg. poor pruning, allow disease in, etc.); supports increasing budget for tree maintenance
- Tenley Gubonich, 1213 Monroe Ave. – supports the Borough to continue managing the street trees.
- Pamela Dunn, 4 Richards Lane – supports the Borough to continue managing the street trees.
- Jean Marie Baldwin, 1212 Monroe – supports the Borough to continue managing the street trees.
- Tim Wilks, 411 Carlisle Ave. - supports the Borough to continue managing the street trees. Recommends “grandfathering” of existing problem trees.
- 7 homeowners also called or emailed Sue Donato to voice their support for the Borough to continue managing the street trees: (Cheryl Sherrick, Joan and Donald Kalavik, Barbara Wood, Dot Wood, Betsy Ruch, James Smith, Bud Horenci). One property owner expressed support for turning the maintenance responsibility over to the homeowners (David Gleason).

Minutes Review:

- Meeting of July 12, 2010: Minutes were accepted as written and will be posted to the Borough website.

Shade Tree Service Requests

Aug. 9th Inspection(/Service Request) List: The following recommendations are made following on-site inspections by members of the Tree Commission.

- 1259 Tyler – trim off dead branch (M)
- 218 Main St. – trim back from house; tree in good condition (L)
- 1008 Bridge St. – no street tree on property. Problem trees are opposite at 1009 Bridge St. Trim out dead limbs from ‘A’ Tree and ‘B’ Tree. (M)
- 1209 Tyler – commission trimmed this tree in Jan. 08; trim out some dead limbs (L)

- 1264 Tyler – three trees were trimmed on 6-11-10.
- 503 Vanderslice – recommend removal (>50% dead) (H)
- 1217 Monroe – tree at 1215; one high branch that drops (large) acorns on 1217 Monroe’s driveway; Selective pruning to reduce area of acorn drop (L)
- 512 Starr St. - elevate over entryway sidewalk and prune for structure (L)
- 1092 Lane Ave. – mostly dead; remove (H)
- 397-A City Line – 1 tree on Lincoln side should be removed
- 1223 Garfield – lots of dead branches; trim dead and try to save tree
- 521 Vanderslice – sap and bee problem; tree was trimmed in 2009; Tree Commission has no capacity for treating seasonal insect problems
- 101 Carson St. (Manavon side) – elevate ‘A’ tree and clear from power line; trim dead branches from ‘B’ tree.

Tree Service Follow Up:

Ms. Gibbons submitted tree contractor work orders for 12 days of work for July – 8/6.

Plantings:

- Ms. Gibbons has confirmed with the streets dept. that all new plantings will be watered weekly. Parks Dept. will water trees in Parks and Streets Dept. will water identified street trees.
- PennVest Grant: Mr. Kusko visited all new plantings to evaluate viability levels. He will submit a report to the PA Horticultural Society.

Old Business

2010 Budget: No report available

Web Site Update:

- The website has been updated to include Tree Commission minutes.
- Mr. Kusko will plan to send the agenda to Melissa so that it can be posted prior to monthly meetings.

PennVest Grant 2011:

- No information yet.

Borough Tree Ordinance Review:

- **Action items:** 1)Commissioners will prepare a report describing the Commission’s position on this issue including the public comments and information from the tree inventory, 2) This report will be presented and discussed directly with Jean Krack at a requested meeting (date to be determined).

(New Business :)

(2011 Budget:

Mr. Kusko reported meeting with Mr. Krack and Mr. Nease regarding first round budget estimates for 2011. Mr. Kusko stated that he recommended (assuming the 2010 back-log list is completed) \$80,000 be allocated for tree maintenance in 2011 to lay the ground work for grid maintenance to begin in 2012 with a budget of \$120,000. He also recommended that the Borough prepare a budget to handle tree maintenance for Borough owned trees (i.e. Parks) and hazard trees not maintained by abutting property owners in the case of a change to the Tree Ordinance.

Meeting closed at 9:10 pm