

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP  
SHADE TREE COMMISSION - MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAR 6, 2018, 7:00 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER: 7:05 PM**

**X ASHBROOK   X D'AMORE   X MITTICA   X ZIEGLER   \_\_\_\_ VACANT**

**X BOS LIAISON: BOYLE-NESTER                      X TOWNSHIP STAFF: LEE**

**X TOWNSHIP ARBORIST: HOSBACH**

**2. PLAN REVIEWS**

- **SLD 06-17 – Construction of a 2-story office building at 633 Germantown Pike.**

Scott Mayer attended the meeting to present the land development application to the STC members. Mr. Mayer provided a background of the project and what, if any, trees are proposed for removal. There are 12 arborvitae identified on the plan that is proposed for transport, therefore no trees will be removed, but just moved from one site to another. The STC members, out of concern for the life of the arborvitae, requested that the applicant include on the plan an 18-month guarantee for the transported arbor vitae in addition to the new landscaping proposed as required by Ch. 55, to ensure that the transported trees survive the transport.

Upon discussion of the plan and the 18-month guarantee period, Aaron Mittica made a motion, seconded by Steve Ziegler, to recommend approval of the plan with the addition of the 18-month guarantee period for all plantings as identified in the landscape plan, including the 12 arbor vitae proposed for transplant. The motion passed unanimously.

Eli Glick was in the audience, and asked a question about soil quality, to which Mr. Mayer responded that all EPA and DEP regulations have been followed and reviewed appropriately.

- **Fence Permit Application for 3016 Crescent Ave.**

Scott Koval attended the meeting to present the fence permit application to the STC members. Mr. Koval provided a background of the project and what tree is proposed for removal. The plans called for removal of four trees total, but upon conducting a site visit with the Township's Consulting Arborist, three of the four trees are in critical decline and were considered "hazardous" trees, therefore will not count towards a "removed" tree. There was one 7 caliper inch tree that is considered healthy, therefore will count as a "removed" tree. The applicant will be responsible for replanting and equivalent of 7 caliper inches of trees as part of the application.

Upon further discussion of this application, a motion was made by Aaron Mittica, seconded by Leigh Ashbrook, to recommend approval of the fence permit, pending the applicant submit a replanting schedule to the Township for the Township Arborist to review and accept in accordance with Ch. 55.

- EDP 2017-24 Chad & Marci Carmeans (317 Barren Hill Rd) – Construction of a new single family home on wooded lot. Applicant has conducted a site visit with the Township Arborist to review the health and vitality of the Tulip Poplars as recommended by the STC at the November meeting. The applicant has submitted updated plans reducing the number of “removal trees” down to 119.5 caliper inches (versus the 386.5 caliper inches as previously presented). The applicant has also submitted updated plans to show a replacement landscape plan consisting of 120 caliper inches of trees. The applicant is requesting to plant 2” trees versus 3” trees, still totaling 120 caliper inches.
- SLD 05-17 Lee Park Commons (1032 E. Hector St.) – Proposed 3 story building. The applicant is not removing any trees (nothing to remove) but is required to plant parking lot trees. The applicant is asking to plant 12 - 2.5” trees versus 3” trees due to space constraints.

Ms. Lee provided the group with a brief background on EDP 2017-24 and SLD 05-17, where a lack of quorum prevented a formal, public recommendation.

For EDP 2017-24, the applicant was reviewed at the November, 2017 STC public meeting but still needed to provide a final landscape plan. The applicant submitted updated landscape plan to be in compliance with the requirements of Ch. 55. Unfortunately, due to a lack of quorum, the STC was not able to make a formal recommendation; therefore the Township’s consulting arborist reviewed the plan and confirmed that the replacement schedule is in line with the township ordinance and that the plan should move forward.

For SLD 05-17, due to the fact that there were no trees proposed for removal and simply asking to plant 2.5 caliper inch trees versus 3 caliper inch trees due to space constraints, and that the STC did not have quorum to review at a public meeting, the Township’s Consulting Arborist reviewed the plan and confirmed that the plan is in line with Chapter 55 and the plan should move forward.

The STC members, upon reviewing the Arborist’s review letters of the two above mentioned applications, Leigh Ashbrook made a motion to recommend approval of both applications, seconded by Dave D’Amore. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. RE-ORGANIZATION**

- a. Selection of Chair – Mr.D’Amore made a motion to nominate Mr. Steve Ziegler, seconded by Mr. Mittica. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Selection of Vice Chair – Mr. Ziegler made a motion to nominate Ms. Leigh Ashbrook, seconded by Mr. Mittica. The motion passed unanimously.

### **4. REVIEW OF CH. 55**

The group started the first discussions of amendment needs for Ch. 55. John Hosbach provided the group with a summary of items that need updating in Chapter 55. The items discussed were:

- Heritage Trees – change the size designation from 40 inches to 30 inches, mainly due to the fact that a 40 in. tree is very hard to find anymore. Furthermore, the purpose of the Shade Tree Ordinance is to preserve as much canopy trees as possible, therefore, trying to save as many large trees as possible should be a primary focus.

- Work to change the language of the ordinance to avoid having to give applicants waivers. Instead of waivers for those who cannot meet the requirements of the ordinance, provide alternative options such as a tree fund that applicants can contribute to. This item would need to be thoroughly vetted by the Township solicitor. Ms. Lee will work with Mr. Hosbach to review other municipalities where this practice is in place.
- Update the replacement tree calculations to gain more canopy trees versus small trees and ground covers.
- Update the triggers for Shade Tree Commission review by requiring all applications for 200 cubic yards or more of earth disturbance to undergo STC review.

Ms. Lee shared that some of these suggestions for updates may require changes to the Township's permitting process, which would create a chain reaction to changes needed across several different departments of the Township. However, these are preliminary changes and will be reviewed and discussed over the next several months to come up with amendments and proposals to keep preservation of shade trees as the primary focus of the ordinance amendment.

Mr. Glick also inquired about a replacement tree program for Township projects. He raised his concerns for the removal of several, large canopy trees along Flourtown Road as part of the intersection improvement projects and asked what programs, if any, the Township has to make sure that trees lost during Township projects are replaced. He also inquired further about any long-term tree planting plans and projects that the Township has as part of an ongoing township goal. Ms. Lee responded that the last "big" tree planting project was at Cedar Grove Park last year when the Township Arborist at that time, Mr. Metz, put together a plan for more trees at that site. It has only been a year since those trees were planted, so there's really not much canopy yet. However, the Township will look into tree planting programs and grants that are available for the Township to tap into.

Mr. Glick also inquired about what regulations there are for residents who remove trees or who do not maintain the trees on their property that may be a hazard to others. Mr. Hosbach responded that from his professional experience, trees that are well within private property belong to that private property and the Township does not get involved with those. The only time a Township or government entity gets involved with tree maintenance is if a tree has the potential to fall or impact a public right of way, where the safety of the general public would be impacted by a tree that is not maintained. Outside of that, any issues of trees within private properties are private matters.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE NOV, 2017 MEETING MINUTES** – Mr. D'Amore made the motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Leigh Ashbrook. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. **ANNOUNCEMENTS - NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 3, 2018**

Mr. Mittica shared with the group that he and his wife are expecting a second child, therefore he has decided to step down from the Shade Tree Commission effective today. He thanked everyone on the STC and hopes he can come back to re-join one day when his schedule is a little more flexible.

7. **ADJOURNMENT** – the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.