

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMISSION  
MEETING OF AUGUST 4, 2020 AT 7:00 PM**

ZIEGLER \_\_\_ D'AMORE \_\_\_X\_\_\_ BORKOWSKI \_\_\_ FASSBENDER \_\_\_X\_\_\_ TURENNE \_\_\_X\_\_\_  
BOS LIAISON, TOLL \_\_\_X\_\_\_ STAFF LIAISON, HALBOM \_\_\_X\_\_\_

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**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PLAN REVIEWS**

Longfield Farms – SLD # 02-19 – Townhome Development.

Rick Collier, Dave Cavanaugh, and Bob Irick presented on behalf of the applicant. The Landscape Plans and Tree Replacement Plans were displayed along with a PowerPoint slideshow. Mr. Collier stressed the importance of the new landscape plan's focus on code compliance with diverse and high quality habitat, and appropriate use of layered, native planting.

The presented plans request replacement of 330 trees (165 shade trees replaced inch-for-inch, 189 ornamental or evergreen species at a two-to-one inch ratio (meaning, two evergreen or ornamental trees equate to one replacement tree), and 396 shrubs at a six-to-one replacement ratio. The replacement species account for 50% of the replacement obligation (30% evergreen/ornamental, and 20% shrub).

Mr. Collier pointed to areas on the plans where specific actions were taken to preserve natural features such as a hedgerow toward the bottom of the plans, and a heritage tree located on site. In total, 362 trees are on site, 85 of which are in poor condition or are dead. There are 54 trees that are identified for removal. The numbers were reviewed and confirmed by the Township Arborist.

Mr. Collier concluded by explaining the obligation placed on the applicant to preserve open space. That obligation prevents them from planting trees in specific areas.

Mr. D'Amore asked the Arborist to confirm the 85 trees are indeed dead, and should not be included in the count. Mr. Hosbach verified that he and a colleague visited the site on three occasions; once with the applicant, and two additional times to verify the information. The Arborist's findings are provided in detail in a memorandum included in this meeting agenda packet. In total, 38% of the trees on site are being removed (including dead trees).

Mr. Fassbender asked Mr. Hosbach to address the replacement substitute numbers, and if that request was reasonable. He replied that the layering system with canopy trees and ornamental trees mixed together was making the most use of the space they have to plant. He reminded the commission of the applicant's obligation to preserve some open space, which limits the planting areas.

Ms. Turenne asked for verification that tree protection fencing would be installed. Mr. Halbom replied that the Township Arborist is now being included in pre-construction meetings along with the Township Arborist to verify TPF (normally displayed on grading plans) is adequate per our code. Ms. Turenne also asked about the maintenance obligations and whether or not the proposed species are hearty enough to survive. Mr. Hosbach confirmed the species pallet are relatively low-maintenance, but that all trees require some level of maintained. Mr. Collier also offered that special care was taken to ensure that the species proposed are appropriate given their size when fully-grown.

#### Public Comment:

Steve Kaufman offered that the plans have improved since the applicant's presentation before the Planning Commission. He asked why the number of replacement trees has dropped since the last application. Mr. Collier replied that the plans have modified to keep more trees on site by moving buildings and pipes. Mr. Kaufman rejected the applicant's claim that the plans are compliant because the chapter 55 ordinance requires STC approval for substitution species.

Eli Glick expressed concern about the approved plans being ignored by the applicant's contractors. Mr. Glick hopes that the protection fencing will be installed before any construction begins, and that the fences will stay in place for the duration of the project.

Debra Harris offered that she was pleased with the plans and thought the idea for open space in that community is very important for the future residents.

Linda Doll asked about the replacement species substitutions, and expressed concern about half of the replacement species not being canopy trees. She stressed the ecological importance of trees, and believes that substitution species do not provide equal storm water management to canopy trees.

Tam Paulits complimented the plant list, but agreed with Ms. Doll that twice as many flowering and evergreen trees are not an equal substitute for a canopy tree. She reminded the audience that the purpose of the chapter 55 ordinance is to preserve the Township canopy. She does not believe a hardship exists to justify granting the substitution request, and suggested the applicant be asked to build fewer homes, and plant more canopy trees. Mr. Collier offered that the mix of species provided on these plans provides ecological benefits that would not be offered by a plan with exclusively canopy trees.

Steve Kaufman requested the Shade Tree Commission require the applicant to plant a few more shade trees in areas where additional plantings may be feasible. Mr. Collier was asked to reply and offered that the plan was not "all or nothing" and was willing to work with the commission to the degree possible. Mr. Cavanaugh offered that the class-B buffer and open space requirements must be included per their conditional approval.

A motion was made by Christian Fassbender, seconded by

"To accept the plans as submitted with the addition of twenty (20) canopy trees, which must be all native species, planted throughout the site assuming these changes do not impact the applicant's conditional use status."

The Shade Tree Commission granted the applicant latitude to plant those additional shade trees at appropriate locations throughout the site. It was clarified that STC's approval is conditional based upon the

addition of the twenty canopy trees and – were the applicant unable to add all twenty canopy trees – they would need to return to the Shade Tree Commission for further discussion.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

The Knolls at Whitmarsh: 505 A Germantown Pike – Following up to the motion made at the July 2020 STC Meeting: The Township Engineer has conducted daily site inspections at the Knolls site, and confirmed all tree protection fencing is in place as per the approved plans. Additionally, all vehicle and machine traffic has been observed exclusively in approved areas, per the approved plans.

Eli Glick offered public comment regarding tree protections and provided photos of past projects taking place throughout the Township. Mr. D'Amore directed Mr. Glick to the Township Engineer for further discussion as his concerns are now beyond the scope of the Shade Tree Commission.

Sydelle Zove requested the commission ask their Board Liaison to address the issue with her fellow Board members.

Steve Kaufman offered that he felt the Township failed to properly enforce their ordinance, and echoed Sydelle's comments.

Ms. Turenne offered that much work does not requiring permitting and therefore, falls outside the scope of the Shade Tree Commission. She asked Mr. Halbom to research some of the referenced projects to verify. The Commission and the Board Liaison discussed communicating these concerns with her fellow Board members.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Glick offered public comment requesting the July meetings minutes be modified to include more specific language from his comments. Mr. Halbom addressed the commission and verified that meeting minutes are not a verbatim transcript, and that anyone is free to record all public meetings if they desire verbatim records.

Ms. Turenne corrected the minutes to note her presence at the July meeting.

The July 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes were erroneously passed due to the fact that Mr. D'Amore was absent from the July meeting, and only two members present were available to approve these draft minutes. The minutes will be reintroduced during the September meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Doll offered comment thanking the board members for their time and commitment to the Township. She expressed her opinion that Township staff do not share an equal level of commitment because they are not residents.

Debra Harris offered an anecdote of her neighbor's recent experience removing a large tree. She noticed that it did not appear the tree company knew about regulations of heritage trees, and suggested efforts be made to alert them moving forward.

Mr. Kaufman offered public comment regarding meeting minutes, and the minimal standards required by law. He added that minutes are allowed to include more information than required by law, and that omissions favored developers in his opinion. He outlined the process for meeting minutes approval at Open Space Committee meetings.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**NEXT MEETING DATES:**

March 3, 2020	April 7, 2020*	May 5, 2020*	June 2, 2020
July 7, 2020	August 4, 2020	September 1, 2020	October 6, 2020
November 3, 2020	December 1, 2020	*Cancelled due to Pandemic	

**ADJOURNMENT:**

David D'Amore motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 pm, the motion was seconded by Christian and passed 3-0.

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INFORMATION**

1. Public meetings of the Shade Tree Commission shall follow a prescribed agenda, which will be available to the general in advance of the meeting.
2. If members of the public wish the Commission to address a specific item at a public meeting, a written request to the Staff Liaison shall be submitted by noon on Friday of the week before the meeting. The written request shall specify the item or items the individual desires to be addressed.
3. The Commission may consider other matters for the agenda as they see fit.
4. The Commission will entertain Public Comment at either the beginning of the meeting or prior to specific action items during the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. Individuals must advise the Chair of their desire to offer such comment.

5. A Public Comment period will be provided at the conclusion of a meeting for input on any subject.
6. The Commission Chair shall preside over Public Comments and may within their discretion:
  - a. Recognize individuals wishing to offer comment.
  - b. Require identification of such persons.
  - c. Allocate total available Public Comment time among all individuals wishing to comment.
  - d. Allocate up to a five (5) minute maximum for each individual to offer Public Comment at a meeting, Township Staff shall time comments and shall announce, "one minute remaining" and "time expired" to the Chair.
  - e. Rule out of order scandalous, impertinent and redundant comment or any comment the discernible purpose of which is to disrupt or prevent the conduct of the business of the meeting including the questioning of, or polling of, or debating with, individual members of the Commission.