

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
SHADE TREE COMMISSION
Thursday, August 6, 2019 at 7:00PM
AT THE WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER:

___ ASHBROOK ___ BORKOWSKI D'AMORE FASSBENDER ZIEGLER

 BOS LIAISON: BOYLE-NESTER TOWNSHIP STAFF: HALBOM

___ TOWNSHIP ARBORIST: HOSBACH

2. 2019 SHADE TREE COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE (AT WHITEMARSH ADMINISTRATION UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

- October 1st
- November 5th (Election Day)
- December 3rd

3. Announcements:

4. PLAN REVIEWS –

Heroes Ground – Veterans Monument at Miles Park – Charles Shepherd a member of the non-profit board overseeing the project presented plans. The plans require two Ash trees to be removed and one Pear tree to be removed (in decline), and one Hornbeam that will be removed to allow ADA access. They propose to add six canopy trees and nine flowering trees to the landscape. One existing memorial tree will also be left untouched by this project.

Chair Ziegler asked if Charles knew the species of trees being planted. The plans show Eastern Redbud, Serviceberry, Hawthorn, Okame Cherry, and Norway Spruce.

Linda Doll of Fairway Road asked if all Ash trees even if they are not diseased. Chair Ziegler replied that Ash trees are dying as a species due to the Emerald Ash Borer. The Township Arborist agreed the species will likely be deceased within one to two years. David D'Amore asked if those Ash trees need to be removed in order to erect the monument. Charles Shepherd stated that he believed the Ash trees were in the path of the ADA walkway.

Eli Glick of Whitefield Drive stated that he would like to see 100% of the species planted be native species.

Mr. Fassbender agreed that native species should be planted and added that the earth disturbance would likely impact the existing Ash trees. Charles agreed to take that request back to their landscape architect. The Township Arborist stated that, by way of the grading, the Ash trees would not survive.

Chair Ziegler opened the discussion for board comment. Mr. D'Amore stated that he would be amenable to the removal of the Ash trees given the Emerald Borer issues, but that he would like to see as many native species used for replacement as possible. Mr. D'Amore made a motion to approve with the caveat that the project's Landscape architects use as many native replacement species as possible.

Joann Tokata offered public comment and asked that the Shade Tree Commission not recommend the project until the list of native species has been provided.

David amended his motion to recommend approval of the project to the Board of Supervisors with the caveat that all replacement species planted be native species. Mr. Fassbender seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

4006 Butler Pike aka “Villages at Whitemarsh” – SLD #11-15) – MZ000062

Julie Von Sprekelsen of Eastburn and Gray, presented to the Shade Tree Commission. Nate Burns, the project’s Landscape Architect also presented. Julie provided a brief overview of the project which comprises of 13.7 acres in the VC-2 zoning district. 67 townhomes are proposed for this project.

Nate presented the plans on behalf of Langan, the project’s engineering firm. They have worked with the Township Arborist, John Hosbach, to recently update the landscape architecture plan since it was first proposed in April of 2017. There are currently 413 trees on the property and 27 boundary trees for a grand total of 440 trees. The most recent assessment found that 243 existing trees were hazardous, dead, in-decline, or invasive species. Nate stated that it is the opinion of Langan that none of those 243 trees should be counted toward replacement requirements set by the Chapter 55 Ordinance. Langan intends to remove 193 trees which they define to be hazardous, dead, in-decline, or invasive.

Langan’s opinion is that a total of 140 trees on site require replacement (33% of the 413 trees counted), less than the 50% removal limit. Of those 140 trees, 34 are larger than 16” in diameter at breast height. Nate stated that it is Langan’s opinion that the 34 larger trees fall under the jurisdiction of the SALDO ordinance, §105.56.1. Nate stated that the SALDO ordinance has a much higher replacement requirement than Chapter 55 and therefore, removes the heritage trees from this count. This is how Langan came up with a 106 tree replacement obligation with an aggregate count of 998 caliper inches to be replaced. Langan divided the 998 caliper inches by the 3” replacement tree requirement set in Chapter 55 resulting in a replacement total of 330 trees.

Nate stated that the Chapter 55 ordinance allowed for some replacement trees to be replaced by shrubs or other ground cover. Chair Ziegler clarified that the ability to substitute replacement trees for shrubs or ground cover is left to the discretion of the Shade Tree Commission. Langan proposed the following substitutions:

- 117 three-inch caliper trees (1:1 caliper inch ratio) = 117 trees
 - 200 evergreen and ornamental trees (2:1 caliper inch ratio) = 100 trees
 - 400 shrubs (6:1 ratio) = 66 trees
 - 1890 ground cover or perennials (40:1 ratio) = 33 trees.
 - 88,365 sq/ft. of meadow (250:1) = 17 trees
- Total: 333 trees or replacement equivalents.

Langan’s opinion is that, while this plan meets the requirements set by Chapter 55, that it would create too dense an environment. As such, an alternate plan was proposed by Langan. It proposed taking 71 trees and relocating them to Township property or paying a fee-in-lieu-of payment to the Township. Mr. D’Amore asked who determined the 243 trees were hazardous, dead, in-decline, or invasive. The Township Arborist stated that he had not completed a tree-by-tree inventory, but he has visited the site and the property shows signs of neglect over the past 15 years or so and will continue to decline if left unaddressed.

Chair Ziegler asked how many of those 243 trees were invasive or non-native. Nate replied that he did not have a specific break down with him. Chair Ziegler clarified that only trees identified by the Township as dead or in-decline would be exempt from the count. Mr. Fassbender asked what the percentage of trees being proposed for off-site planting was. Nate replied that approximately 16% of the trees would be planted off-site. Nate explained that the SALDO requirements required the 34 trees with a DBH of greater than 16” to be replaced by 170 four-inch caliper trees. Langan requests they be allowed to plant those larger trees along Butler Pike and the interior

roadways. Langan will request a waiver from the Planning Commission from 105.48B regarding planting intervals. They will ask to be waived from the flowering tree requirement in that ordinance. Chair Ziegler opened the floor for public comment:

Steve Kaughman offered public comment regarding he and his wife's concerns and asked that the Shade Tree Commission tour the site. He mentioned disagreement with the counts provided by Langan.

Denise Magiti-Nowak asked if there were sidewalks in the development and if so, will those trees interfere with the sidewalk?

Linda Doll offered public comment and expressed concern about the tree count and the replacement substitutions for trees.

Chair Ziegler asked Nate if he wanted to clarify the tree count. Nate replied that Langan's count was based on their understanding of past precedent set by the Shade Tree Commission, and that they would request the same considerations granted to past projects. Ms. Von Sprekelsen stated that the removal of non-native and invasive tree species from their count was based upon the Township's definition of clearcutting, which does not include the selective removal of non-native trees and shrubs. Chair Ziegler disagreed with her interpretation. The Township Arborist stated that his professional opinion supports not counting the non-native and invasive species in this count. Chair Ziegler reiterated that the goal of the Shade Tree Commission is to see 100% of removed trees replaced by trees and that the replacement of trees for non-tree plantings is up to the sole discretion of the Shade Tree Commission. Ms. Von Sprekelsen reiterated that this project could not fit the number of replacement trees required on-site, and therefore justified the use of non-tree replacements. Chair Ziegler stated that assumed the plans kept the same number of Townhouse units.

Mr. D'Amore agreed with Chair Ziegler's statement about the goal of the Shade Tree Commission and asked for an itemized count of the 193 trees and their current condition. Mr. Fassbender stated that he feels he needs to visit the site before he is comfortable voting on this project. Mr. D'Amore agreed that walking the site would be beneficial for sake of due diligence. The Assistant Township Manager agreed to schedule two tours of the grounds for the Shade Tree Commissioners. Chair Ziegler reopened the public comment period.

A resident who did not identify herself asked that the trees not be planted nearby power lines.

Eli Glick offered comment and asked that all five Shade Tree Commissioners walk the grounds. He also asked they consider the impact of these trees removal on the wetlands and the impact of invasive species on the site.

David Miller offered comment regarding the historical use of the property as an art studio and asked that everyone consider how light is cast on the site. He asked that fewer houses be erected on site.

Steve Kaughman offered additional public comment and stated that more than 50% of trees are being removed from the site. He advocated for the inclusion of invasive trees in the replacement count.

Tamara Polis offered comment concerning the definition of "off-site" and asked where that would be. She asked that the focus of tree removal be based upon the health of each tree as opposed to its species.

Edmund Shin offered comment concerning storm water management and the negative impact of development on the flow of storm water. He asked that the site be protected. He stated appreciation for the Shade Tree Commission's diligence on this issue and requested a report be created for the public.

Bob Sage offered public comment concerning clear cutting and advocated that development be made around the existing landscape.

Chair Ziegler asked for Board comment. Mr. D'Amore stated that visiting the site was the most responsible approach and that he hoped to see it soon. Ms. Von Sprekelsen thanked the Commission for their time.

TOWNSHIP ARBORIST UPDATES

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SELECTIVE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (FOLLOW UP)

This item was tabled; however, Chair Ziegler offered public comment at the request of a resident.

Eli Glick stated that the comprehensive plan was an opportunity for the Shade Tree Commission to state their vision for trees and other vegetation.

Steve Kaughman offered public comment suggestions procedural changes to the way Shade Tree Commission reviews plans.

Vincent Manuel offered public comment and identified himself as the Chair of the Planning Commission. He welcomed comment from the Shade Tree Commission and expressed a willingness to include their comments in the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Supervisor Nester pointed out that the Shade Tree Commission will not meet again until after the next Planning Commission Meeting.

Mr. Manuel stated that it is an ongoing process and that the Shade Tree Commission will have ample time to prepare and offer comment to the Planning Commission. Mr. Manuel added that the plans for Abolition Hall have not yet been approved by the Planning Commission.

6. CHAPTER 55 ORDINANCE UPDATE

The Assistant Township Manager stated that the draft ordinance would hopefully be updated within a week of the next Shade Tree Commission meeting and posted to the Township website for public review.

7. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 2019 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. D'Amore to table the approval of minutes until the next meeting. Mr. Fassbender seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Linda Doll offered public comment and thanked Mr. Manuel for clarifying where the Villages at Whitmarsh project stood at this time. She expressed disappointment that the Veterans Monument project will require the removal of trees. Linda stated that she was told at a past Planning Commission meeting that no trees would be removed for that project.

The Assistant Township Manager responded that trees are being removed to allow ADA access. Chair Ziegler reiterated that the loss of Ash trees was also imminent.

David Miller offered comment regarding the Villages at Whitmarsh and apologized if he appeared harsh earlier. He offered his appreciation to the Commission for their tolerance.

Eli Glick asked if the publicized draft ordinance would be black-lined so that residents could see the original language. The Assistant Township Manager stated that he needs to consult with other Township staff and will require time to prepare a useful and easily understandable document.

Bill Toten spoke about past language used to describe residents and developers at public meetings. He expressed additional concerns about development density.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Ziegler opened the floor to Board Comment.

Mr. D'Amore thanked the public for their input and stated that these meetings have made him a better commissioner member. Mr. Fassbender agreed with Mr. D'Amores comments and reiterated his desire to see the Villages at Whitmarsh in-person.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE:

- a. Tuesday, September 3rd

11. ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Mr. Fassbender, seconded by Mr. D'Amore, the meeting was adjourned.