

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
SHADE TREE COMMISSION
Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 7:00PM
AT THE WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

MINUTES

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)

- November 5th (Will be rescheduled due to Election Day)
- December 3rd

3. PLAN REVIEWS –

Whitemarsh Authority Building/2015 Joshua Road – GP# 2019-11 – Construction of New Township Authority Building:

Barbara Merlie from Rudolph Clark represented the Authority. The Planning Commission has approved the plan, The Supervisors granted the land development waiver contingent on the issuance of the grading permit. Chris Peterson from Carrol Engineering presented the landscape plan. The plan calls for the removal of 53 trees totaling 565 caliper inches being removed. They propose to replace with 34 total trees, nine of which are parking lot trees not counted toward the replacement, plus an additional 25 trees which were recommended by the Township Arborist. This plan proposes to pay a “fee in lieu” of planting the replacement trees that cannot fit on site. The Township Arborist, John Hosbach, has opined that the utilities on site prevent the full replacement of trees on site. He expressed satisfaction with plan as currently proposed.

Chair Ziegler asked if it was possible to plant additional trees on site. Mr. Halbom reported that the Arborist had visited the site and is satisfied with the proposed plan. Chair Ziegler opened the floor for board comment; hearing none, he opened the floor for public comment.

Steve Kaughman asked if additional trees could be planted nearby the road.

Eli Glick felt the aerial photos do not effectively show the trees on site and asked if anyone had toured the grounds. Mr. Fassbender responded that he would be interested in viewing the site. Mr. Glick stated he does not like the plan to accept a fee in lieu of replacement payment.

Suzanne Epstein of Mitchel Court commented that residents are constantly complaining about traffic and pollution. She stated that trees are our best defense but that developers receive too many waivers for tree replacement.

Steve Kaughman offered additional public comment regarding the tree replacement criteria in the Sub-Division and Land Development Ordinance and if it was enforced on this project. Barbara Merlie responded on behalf of the Authority that the Board of Supervisors had already granted a land development waiver. Chris Peterson added that the open-top tanks cannot have trees overhead because falling leaves could negatively impact the equipment and the Authority's ability to satisfy their DEP permit requirements.

Eli Glick offered additional public comment and asked if more trees could be planted around the perimeter. He encouraged the commission to tour the site and require replacement trees that cannot be fit on site to be planted at the Gambone tract.

Mr. D'Amore asked Mr. Halbom if we could require plantings at the Gambone tract. Mr. Halbom replied that fee in lieu of is preferable and could still allow for off-site planting anywhere on Township property.

Steve Kaughman asked if the Commission if they felt that planting around the perimeter area was feasible without interfering with the leaf composting area. Chair Ziegler responded that planting around the perimeter could still be accomplished with a fee in lieu. Mr. Peterson added that the perimeter area is already occupied with trees.

Chair Ziegler made a motion that the project go back to the drawing board and they look for more areas to plant trees on site. Mr. Fassbender seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TOWNSHIP ARBORIST UPDATES

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

Mr. Kaughman offered public comment about the relationship between Chapter 55 and the land development process. He feels that Chapter 55 is viewed as a low priority.

Eli Glick offered public comment about the role of the Shade Tree Commission in the overall comprehensive plan as it relates to zoning requirements.

5. CHAPTER 55 ORDINANCE

Mr. Fassbender offered that he has mixed feelings about a fee in lieu policy. He is concerned it could be abused by applicants to shortchange the Township in terms of tree planting. Ms. Borkowski expressed that fee in lieu could be used as a last resort, but that the Shade Tree Commission has that say. Mr. D'Amore had questions about a timeline being assigned to fees in lieu, to ensure that trees are actually planted. He agreed that it should only be used as a last resort. Chair Ziegler reminded that a fee in lieu is the alternative to a waiver. Chair Ziegler opened public comment:

Debra Harris offered support for a fee in lieu as a last resort as opposed to a waiver.

Eli Glick expressed doubt that the Township would use the fees for tree planting based upon his interpretation of the draft ordinance.

Steve Kaughman offered comment about the look back provision and replacement criteria in Chapter 55.

Tamara Paulitz offered public comment about ambiguities in the current ordinance and draft ordinance. She shared a review of her edits with the Shade Tree Commission.

Eli Glick offered additional public comment and asked that we start from scratch and use working groups of residents to design the new ordinance.

Debra Harris offered public comment about the commemorative shade tree fund.

6. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Ziegler referenced a letter from Langen Engineering to Charlie Guttenplan. It was not brought up at the September meeting, but the letter refers to the September meeting. Mr. Halbom clarified that the letter was not authored by the Township. Chair Ziegler felt that a few points need to be made about that meeting: first, that the inclusion of plantings aside from trees is at the discretion of the Shade Tree Commission. The developer should have sought permission and Chair Ziegler stated that was one reason for the denial. Second, there was confusion surrounding the tree count and the state of the trees' health. Third, Chair Ziegler felt that by not including dead and dying trees, they omitted enough trees to sway their 50% removal requirement.

Chair Ziegler did not feel that this plan will keep 50% or more trees on site.

Mr. Halbom asked Chair Ziegler if he has specific corrections about the minutes. Chair Ziegler responded that some comments were omitted from the record, such as Steve Kaughman's comment about the definition of the word "tree."

Chair Ziegler motioned to table the minutes until the November 21st meeting.

Steve Kaughman offered public comment and asked the Planning Commission be informed of Shade Tree Commission's actions.

David D'Amore seconded the motion to table the minutes until November 21st, the motion passed unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Steve Kaughman offered additional public comment regarding coordination of the Chapter 55 and Chapter 105 revisions. Mr. Halbom responded that the decision to update Chapter 55 independently was made due to the Planning Director's schedule being occupied with the Selective Comprehensive Plan update. Steve advocated that the Shade Tree Commission's role in the land development process be strengthened. **Chair Ziegler motioned that Chapters 105 and 55 be tied tighter together and strengthened.** He then opened public comment:

Eli Glick commented that the Shade Tree's input for the Selective Comprehensive Plan Update should be more generic and broader. He pointed out that there are no other areas within the document which call reference to specific ordinances, but rather speak to a shared vision.

Steve Kaughman responded to Mr. Glick's comment.

Mr. Fassbender seconded Chair Ziegler's motion, it was passed unanimously.

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Ziegler offered to craft a letter to Planning Commission following his motion. Chair Ziegler announced a tree canopy conference on Friday, October 18 at Haverford College. Chair Ziegler reopened public comment:

Susan Extine of Mitchell Court asked for the Shade Tree Commission's advice and support to save street trees in her neighborhood. The HOA's management company hired an Arborist and is removing the trees, but she feels that the arborist may have professional conflicts. She asked if the Township could stop the removal. Mr. Halbom responded that only heritage trees could be prevented from removal. Mr. Halbom offered to visit her property and measure the trees.

Debra Harris added that Susan Extine address the conflict issue with her HOA board.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fassbender made a motion to adjourn, Mr. D'Amore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

- a. Tuesday, November 5th is Election Day. The Shade Tree Commission will discuss a rescheduled for November 21, 2019.