

UPPER DUBLIN SHADE TREE COMMISSION
Minutes of Thursday, October 20, 2016

Members: Steven Stone, Chair
Chris Dartley, Vice-Chair
Debbie Hoffmann
Glenn Meyer
Ronald Ayres, Secretary

Visitors: Joel A. Johnson, Executive Director, Montgomery County Housing Authority [Re: N. Hills Manor]
Kyle F. Speece, Senior Developer, Pennrose Properties, LLC [Re: North Hills Manor]
Mark J. Buchvalt, PE, Project Manager, T and M Associates [Re: North Hills Manor]
Derek Dureka, Director, Parks & Recreation

Action Taken on Tree Applications:

[DBH = Diameter at Breast Height]

1. 1201 Cedar Road, at Loch Alsh Ave - Declining Linden: [Ref: July 28 and Sept. 15, 2016 STC Minutes] The STC recognizes that this tree (first large tree on north side of Loch Alsh Ave from Cedar Rd.) is in decline, but will re-examine the tree as to whether it presents a potential hazard prior to next meeting.

2. Dreshertown Road (former Prudential property), between Welsh and Tuckerstown Roads (BET Investments, Inc.) - 16 Trees - Pruning and/or Removal: [Ref: STC Minutes of Sept. 15, 2016] STC representatives Steve Stone, Glenn Meyer, and Ron Ayres, along with Andy Fowler, met with Peter Clelland (BET Director of Development) and their arborist Pete Paravati (Matos Tree Service, Eagleville, PA) on October 5, 2016 at the site to review and mark trees and/or branches posing potential hazards to traffic on Dreshertown Road. All came to a mutual agreement that 16 trees were involved, which were suitably marked with ribbon by Pete Paravati. These included some Ash, a few Black Walnut, and a large Norway Maple, among others. In general, most of the Black Walnut along the stretch, although already dropping leaves, were deemed healthy and effective. The STC approved the pruning and/or removal as so determined at the on-site meeting.

3. Three Tuns Playground (UD Twp) - Five (5) Dead or Declining Trees, plus 2 Additional Ash: [Ref: July 28 and Sept. 15, 2016 STC Minutes] Derek Dureka announced that the approved removals were awarded to Clauser Tree Care and should occur within two weeks. Ron Ayres requested copies of estimates received for the Ash removals, as a basis for helping to project Ash removal costs due to EAB. Significant replantings are discussed elsewhere.

4. Casals Place #340--Townsend Application - Pruning of Trees on Butler Pike and Casals Place: The STC considered the Application dated 10/11/16 of Ms. Frannie Townsend, owner of 340 Casals Place, for pruning the trees in the right-of-way along the Butler Pike and Casals Place frontages of her property. The Application states that the trees are "overgrown", "may be half dead", have "started dropping huge brown leaves in August", and "are obstructing the view of my house". The STC also noted observations from Andy Fowler, UD Department of Public Works, that certain of the trees may have limbs that protrude over the roadway at a height lower than required clearances. All members of the STC inspected the site before today's meeting.

The STC unanimously found that:

- The trees appear healthy, beautiful and shapely and add beauty to the Township's streetscape.
- The trees are not overgrown. Rather, they demonstrate normal, healthy growth patterns.
- None of the trees are "half dead" nor show signs of illness, decay or decline.
- Leaf drop in August is not unusual and can result from a variety of factors, most commonly drought. By itself, early leaf drop is not indicative of ill health.
- Although obstruction of view is a subjective judgement, the view of the house is not materially obstructed. Moreover, the STC does not consider view obstruction as a reason for pruning otherwise healthy trees.
- The tree on Casals farthest from Butler has many "sprouts" or "suckers" growing at its base.
- There do not appear to be any roadway height impingements from tree limbs.

[More]

[4. Casals Place #340--Townsend Application - Pruning of Trees on Butler Pike and Casals Place] *Continued*

Accordingly, the STC unanimously DISAPPROVED the Application in all respects except for removing the "sprouts" or "suckers" at the base of the tree on Casals farthest from Butler. The STC authorizes the Owner or her designee to remove the sprouts. Alternatively, Mr. Fowler has offered to perform such work as has STC Commissioner Ayres. The STC authorizes either of them to do such work. In addition, the STC invites Mr. Fowler to present further information to the STC regarding limbs that protrude over the roadway at a height lower than required clearances.

Action Taken on Development Plans:

- 1. Camp Hill Road Widening Project (UD Twp) - Replacement Trees:** Andy Fowler informed the STC in an Oct. 10, 2016 email that the project was essentially complete and ready for installation of replacement trees at locations to be determined by the STC. He recommended that in view of the significant understory growth which exists at the site and which has continued to flourish, the replacement trees be planted on other roadways or other municipal property. The replacements would be balled & burlapped (B&B) trees of minimum 2.5" caliber, with funding for 15-18 trees to be planted by the Township in early November, either at the project site on Camp Hill Road or at other locations. The STC assessed the project site and agreed that the trees would be better placed in Township parks at the discretion of Derek Dureka.

- 2. North Hills Manor (Montgomery County Housing Authority):** Joel A. Johnson, Executive Director of Montgomery County Housing Authority, presented the background and rationale for the replacement and redesign of the Authority's housing at North Hills Manor, bound by Logan, Walnut, and Chelsea Avenues in North Hills. The outdated, mostly row house structures would be replaced by predominately twin homes with some townhouses placed in a more pleasing arrangement within the same site. The project would retain the same number of living units (50), a mix of 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedrooms, with some units fully ADA-compliant. Direct off-street (driveway) parking is provided, supplemented by an interior lot near the townhouses. An interior green common open space and tot-lot are included. The housing would be constructed and managed by Pennrose Properties, LLC, operating from an administrative building on-site. Current residents will be able to continue to live on-site as the construction proceeds, in three phases, although some movement between units may be necessary. Most trees on the two parcels will be removed to accommodate the redesign and grading necessary. Tree removal counts by size were on the plan, but species were not identified. The STC would have preferred to know the species and size to be removed. Twenty-six (26) shade trees are provided along the streets, with additional trees around the parking lot and in the open space. The street trees are uniformly spaced, generally one per building, with a single species along each block. The species were listed, but this is subject to change, as the Township environmental board and landscape consultant preferred a species mix containing more native trees, as would the STC. The STC requested that the tree species be mixed in each block, to reduce the impact of pests and diseases. The STC approved the concept and tree locations, but withheld approval of the species and distribution pending modifications, which can be provided informally to the STC. STC comments will be forwarded to Mark Buchvalt.

- 3. Pizek Estate - Dreshertown Road/Camp Hill Road Corner - Possible Unauthorized Tree Removals:** Debbie Hoffmann advised the STC that a large area on the estate curving around the Dreshertown Road/Camp Hill Road corner has been clear-cut, resulting in the removal of many large trees not believed to be part of the approved development plan. Steve Stone will contact Rick Barton to determine whether Township action, including suitable replacement trees, is required.

- 4. Rite-Aid, Bethlehem Pike at Loch Alsh Avenue - Possible Unauthorized Severe Pruning of Pin Oak:** Ron Ayres noted to STC members that the large, beautiful Pin Oak at the corner of this property has been severely and inappropriately limbed-up nearly half its height, resulting in a hideous appearance and detrimental to its health and safety. This street tree was designated in the Rite-Aid development plan to be preserved. In October 2014, at the request of Paul Leonard, Township Manager, the STC evaluated the apparent decline of the seven (7) Sugar Maples that were required to be planted as street trees (the Pin Oak was assessed to be healthy and effective). As a result of that analysis, Ron Ayres met with the property owner and developed a strategy for replacing the declining Sugar Maples, which has not yet been implemented, although the trees were removed and stumps ground recently. Preservation of the Pin Oak was an important requirement in the strategy. The STC is concerned about this egregious pruning and will pursue this matter fully with the Township.

[More]

Other Action:

1. **Minutes of September 15, 2016 (revised 10-20-16)** were distributed and approved.
2. **PHS Fall 2016 Bare-Root Tree Order:** [Ref: STC Minutes of Sept. 15, 2016] Ron Ayres received a confirmation from PHS (Barley VanClief) of our tree order, with four (4) Pin Oak substituted for 2 Red and 2 Sugar Maples, as we requested if available. Two (2) Red Maple and two (2) Allegheny Serviceberry are designated for Glenn Meyer for planting at Robbins Park. The remainder belong to Parks and Rec. A credit of \$50 was noted to cover two poor trees received in the Spring. Derek will coordinate payment and delivery on Nov. 17. Derek expects to plant a few at Three Tuns Park around the playground and the remainder at Burn Brae Park off Ayr Lane, to replace bamboo.
3. **PHS Request for Upper Dublin Tree Counts toward One Million Trees:** Steve Stone responded to a request from Barley VanClief of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) for tree counts from our semi-annual tree giveaways, as they can be used toward PHS's regional One Million Tree goal begun in 2011. Steve's valuable statistics note: through 2010 the STC had planted (or provided): 1,760 trees through all programs; for 2011 through 2016 to date: 1,288 trees (1,014 through our Adopt-a-Tree program); resulting in a grand total of: 3,048 trees to date! Details by year are available.
4. **Tree Protection from Deer:** The STC authorized the purchase of 200 Black Tree Guards (~ \$900), 10 50' rolls of fencing (~ \$500), and 300 Metal Stakes (~ \$300) in order to ensure the protection of trees planted in parks and along streets from deer and other animals. Derek will coordinate the purchase and storage.
5. **Annual STC Planting Program 2016 (focusing on Ash EAB Amelioration):** The STC authorized up to \$3,400 from our 2016 budget for the purchase and installation of replacement trees at Three Tuns Park and other sites where Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has afflicted Ash trees. Chris Dartley and Ron Ayres will select trees and arrange for installation. Derek Dureka will establish sites.
6. **STC Budget Proposal for 2017:** The STC approved a budget request similar to 2016. Steve Stone will complete the proposal.
7. **Fall 2016 Adopt-a-Tree Program, Saturday, October 15, 2016, 8:00 - 9:00 @ Township Building:** The program was highly successful, with great interest and turnout, some arriving a half-hour before the start time. Seventy (70) trees were distributed, with the remaining ten (10) being made available to late requests and to Robbins Park. Steve provided a detailed report to the Board of Commissioners.
8. **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Threat to Ash Trees:** [Ref: prior STC Minutes] The STC notes that EAB was found recently along Dreshertown Road, in addition to the initial discovery in Three Tuns Park on August 4, 2016. EAB is believed to be affecting Ash in other Township parks as well. The STC agreed that the STC focus should be on keeping the public informed and on re-planting efforts as Ash trees decline and are removed. Note the STC 2016 Annual Planting Plan will begin addressing Ash replacement in Township parks. Ron Ayres will work toward establishing relevant information on the Township's web-site, including the Ash survey of one-third of the Township. The STC has determined that there is little to be gained by expanding the Ash survey to the entire Township and instead will divert STC funds toward public awareness and Ash replacement.

Next Meetings: Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016, at 3:30 PM
Thursday, Dec. 15, 2016, at 3:30 PM

[Meetings at 3:30 PM in Twp Building:]
[3rd Thursdays, September – June,]
[Last Thursday in July; None in August]

Distributed:

[All Actions Unanimous Unless Otherwise Stated]

1. STC Agenda for October 20, 2016 [Steve Stone]

Prepared by: Ronald Ayres, October 22, 2016; Revised October 26, 2016 per Steve Stone