

Morristown Shade Tree Commission (STC13) Meeting Minutes
Monthly Meeting

December 10, 2013
7:00 pm meeting, Room 201
Morristown Town Hall

Members present:

Tina Wahlstrom, Chair
Chantal Diedrich, Secretary
Karl Roettcer
Louise Witt
Joe Torres
Kristin Ace
Michael Rockland

Members absent:

Anne Bertucci

Guest: Barbara Heskins Davis, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey

- I. **Roll call**
- II. **Minutes:** no minutes to approve tonight
- III. **Statement of Compliance with NJ Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law)**
made by Tina at 7:05.
- IV. **Update on Tree Inventory by Barbara Davis:** In 2011 the Land Conservancy was asked to finish the town's tree inventory. Two other people had worked on it: a Yale graduate student in Forestry started it. This student also made a book on how to ID trees and how to use the iTree GPS unit. There was a second individual (community service) who was tasked with identifying most of the town's trees and inputting the information into the inventory. The Land Conservancy then completed the tree inventory one week before Hurricane Irene hit (October 2011). This year the Town (based on an STC recommendation) hired them again to do a random sample (10% of the 3017 trees already cataloged), to see how accurate our current tree inventory is, because it hasn't been updated since the storms (Irene, Sandy and the Halloween snow storm) . Barbara's report: It took 2 people 30 hours to complete the inventory of 300 trees. The arcGIS system identified a random sampling of 300 town trees by number and GPS coordinate. They uploaded the GPS units with these 300 trees(with help from Mark Gandy) and then went out in the field and completed a new assessment (e.g., species, DBH, condition). They found that only 30% of the trees are correctly identified. 7% of the trees are gone (from storms, and many of them were ID'd as hazard trees anyway). The individual that spent the summer working

on the inventory as part of his community service ID'd most of the trees incorrectly. Unfortunately he had done 89% of the original 3017 trees in the inventory. (7% were done by Yale graduate student, and those were correct. The rest were ID'd by the Land Conservancy and they were 100% correct too). So our original summary analysis from 2011 is inaccurate. Example: Callory Pear and Red Maple are our most common tree in the city, not the Honey Locust and American Basswood. Conclusion from the Land Conservancy: Morristown has a great engineering department, a top notch GPS unit and arcGIS software program, and a wonderful start to our town tree inventory. A lot of money and effort has been spent on equipment, software and input. The Land Conservancy recommends that a new inventory needs to be done. Further it should be done in one season and by one well trained entity. Not piece by piece like it had been done before. It would take one season- like late spring to August. Fall would be used for the analysis. Barbara strongly suggested that we complete the inventory. It is a great asset to our town.

Sustainable Jersey may have grants available.

STC may ask Barbara to present this information to the Mayor and Michael Rogers so they will understand our current situation and the need to update our inventory.

Action: TW to inform MR of the findings.

- V. Spring Planting:** Jeff is anxious to get the bidding process started for the trees for spring planting. TW reported on a conversation she had with Rich W. (town arborist) prior to this STC meeting. He thinks we should plant 3-3.5" trunk size, instead of the traditional 2-2.5" that the town usually plants. We will call it our showcase planting, because they are on major thoroughfares of our town; Speedwell, South Street, Morris St. and Washington St. and around the Green where there are empty tree wells. He is investigation the best type of Pear tree to plant that will match the Bradfords but will be heartier and less likely to break apart, the cost and availability. **Action:** Rich will send his recommendations to us, then Jeff will get the bid out in early January.

TW also reported that Rich W. feels he will be able to do the field part of our inventory with the GPS, and the Land Conservancy could do the arcGIS piece. This would save money, and Rich would become very familiar with our town's forest.

Karl had hesitation for spending a lot of money redoing the inventory. He stated that we could do inventories block by block, as planting occurs and use manual methods rather than the GPS and arcGIS systems.

VI. Meetings for 2014: There was a general discussion regarding the meeting schedule for 2014. We agreed that it has taken more time than we thought to get our plans accomplished due to various unforeseen obstacles. Therefore it was proposed that we meet twice a month throughout the year. However, there was some pushback since it may not always be possible to have a quorum. Rather than book two meetings a month for the entire year it was suggested that for January and February 2014 we would commit to meeting twice a month and then revisit the subject. Tina made a motion, Michael seconded and all voted aye. Meeting dates: Jan. 14, Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25.

ACTION: Tina will reserve the room.

VIII. Meeting adjourned.