

Morristown Shade Tree Commission (STC) Meeting Minutes
Organizational meeting April 16, 2013
7:00-8:30pm Room 201
Morristown Town Hall

Members present:

Ann Bertucci
Tina Wahlstrom
Silvia LeBlanc
Michael Rockland
Joe Torres
Karl Roettger
Kristin Ace
Chantal Diedrich
Louise Witt

I. Introductions

Each member introduced him/herself, gave a brief description of why they wanted to be a member of the STC, their relevant skills, member status and term length. Tina shared a brief history of how the Shade Tree Commission was established. Although Samantha Rothman was not in attendance her role in helping establish the STC was emphasized.

II. Statement of Compliance with NJ Open Public Meetings Act (Sunshine Law)-read by Louise.

A copy was provided by email in advance of the meeting to all STC members. Tina: It is very important that we all understand and follow this law. Our meetings must be open to the public, with sufficient notice. Therefore, the STC must post it's meeting schedule, agenda and minutes in a place that is available to the public. This is traditionally done by The Town on their website. Kristin Wedderburn is our contact.

III. Election of Officers (President, Secretary)

Louise: Nominated Tina as President of the STC. There was a motion to approve, which was seconded. The STC unanimously voted Tina Wahlstrom as President. Chantal Diedrich expressed interest in being the Secretary. She was formally nominated, there was a motion to approve, which was seconded. The STC unanimously voted Chantal Diedrich as Secretary.

Tina: While the Secretary has the responsibility to create Minutes of every meeting, it is just as important that members of the STC review them for accuracy before they are accepted at the subsequent meeting. Chantal will target distribution of the Minutes for comment at least a week before the next meeting. Minutes will be formally accepted at each meeting and then posted to the Town website along with the agenda.

IV. Review of Shade Tree Commission Ordinance

STC members had been provided with a copy of the ordinance in advance of the meeting. This was read and discussed to ensure that everyone understood the scope of the STC remit.

Tina: we have responsibility for municipal trees only, not trees on private property. The STC has an advisory role with the Zoning and Planning Boards, and needs to make sure that there is follow-through on Site Plans. When a developer or builder shows certain trees on a plan, it is our job to make sure the plantings occur as agreed. At the next STC meeting we will have to decide how to work with the Planning Board and the Zoning Board/Board of Adjustment. We will need a liaison for the Planning Board (meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month), so please think about whether or not that is a role you would like to take on. We will discuss interest in this position at the next meeting.

Tina: a major objective for the STC this year will be to establish a process for how we operate. It will be essential that we create an efficient and effective partnership with DPW. At the CORE training we had a session with an attorney and member of the Richfield Park STC. I have spoken to him about their process and will share it with you for your consideration.

ACTION: Tina will forward a description of Richfield Park's STC process for working with their DPW.

ACTION: Tina invite Jeff Hartke to the next meeting to discuss a process.

V. Establish regular meeting schedule

The STC voted to meet at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of each month as our regularly scheduled meeting.

The STC felt that it may be necessary to meet more often while we are establishing how to operate, determining roles and responsibilities within the STC, etc. A vote was taken to have the second STC meeting on April 23, 2013 at 7pm.

ACTION: Tina to create agenda, send to Kristen Wedderburn, have member's names added to the STC website, reserve meeting room and have meetings added to the Town calendar.

VI. Adoption of Rules of Procedure

Tina: We must define what a quorum is for the STC

Louise: It should be 5 since we have 9 members.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously established that the STC quorum would be 5.

VII. Achieving Approved Status with NJ Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act

A copy of the Morristown Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) was provided to members of the STC prior to the meeting. The CFMP was reviewed at a high level.

Tina: Please become acquainted with the CFMP. At the next meeting we will need to prioritize a couple of items where we will focus our energy this year. For example, two potential items are: tree inventory and tree planting, but there are many others to choose from.

ACTION: Tina will resend PDF attachment.

Louise reviewed the elements required to achieve Approved Status as well as the benefits (liability protection, access to grants).

Tina: A key element of the CFMP is an updated tree inventory.

Louise: Morristown has tree inventory from around 3 years ago. The Morristown Environmental Commission (MEC) had an intern from the Yale forestry division perform the inventory. A computer program exists of this inventory. This is a dynamic working document, and needs to be continuously updated. In particular the tree damage from the storms, Irene and Sandy, and any other tree events that has happened since it was completed in 2010, must be cataloged. A major project for the STC this year will be to get this updated. An updated tree inventory is the basis for the CFMP.

Louise has a contact with someone who may help us update our inventory program- Alexander McCartney, who is involved with CORE Training and works for the NJ Community Forestry Program.

ACTION: Louise contact Alexander

Tina: Jeff Hartke, Director DPW, has responsibility for the tree inventory. We should have him update the STC on the current status of the inventory, the process currently in place for managing municipal trees and to start work developing a new process that includes the STC.

ACTION: Tina invite Jeff Hartke to the next meeting to discuss the tree inventory.

Louise: Provided a description of CORE Training which is provided by the NJ Community Forestry Program. Tina and Louise were trained in 2010 and that training still meets the requirement for Approved Status. All members of the STC will be encouraged to take this training. We need to have a town employee trained.

Tina: We will ask Jeff who on his DPW team he can recommend for the training.

ACTION: Louise find out when and where the next CORE Training is being held.

VIII. Coordination with DPW-tree management budget 2013

Tina: There is \$100,000 -\$150,000 designated for trees in the budget. This will be used for planting and to hire a part-time arborist.

IX. Tree consultant

General discussion: we will need an arborist to recommend species of trees for planting, among other things. It is important that this job be filled soon. The STC would like input on the Scope of Work, credentials, and the selection process if possible.

Tina: It is recommended that municipalities hire Certified Tree Experts.

ACTION: Kristin will ask Michael Rogers for input on the process for hiring an arborist.

X. Miscellaneous

Louise: May 7, 7PM Environmental Commission Meeting: Carolle Huber presenting the CVS plan (2nd floor). All interested should attend.

Louise: Shade Tree Federation's Annual Meeting in the fall.

Anne: Should we work on a Mission Statement? STC: good idea.

Louise: We can meet the requirements to be designated a Tree City, USA because the town has established a "tree budget" of \$100,000, which works out to more than \$2 per capita, and has established a STC. Now all we have to do is have an official proclamation for Arbor Day by the Mayor at a Council meeting.

ACTION: Louise will talk to the Mayor's administrative assistant to get a proclamation for Arbor Day, which is April 27.

XI. Meeting adjournment

