

Morristown Shade Tree Commission(STC) Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2013

7-8:30 pm meeting, Room 201

Members present:

Tina Wahlstrom, Chair

Silvia LeBlanc

Michael Rockland

Joe Torres

Karl Roettger

Kristin Ace

Chantal Diedrich

Louise Witt

Absent: Ann Bertucci

Guest: Jeff Hartke Morristown Director of Public Works/Town Engineer

I. Statement of Compliance with NJ Open Public Meetings Act

II. Minutes

Acceptance of the Minutes from the April 16, 2013 meeting was deferred.

III. STC working with the Department of Public Works(DPW)

Guest: Jeff Hartke

Tina: The STC requires an updated inventory of the community forest in order to implement the Community Forestry Management Plan(CFMP). In addition, while the STC has responsibility for and authority over the Morristown community forest as outlined in the ordinance, we have no authority over town employees who work on the trees. Jeff Hartke oversees the DPW who plant, prune, and remove hazard trees owned by Morristown. The STC and DPW will need a process to define how the two groups will work together to effectively and efficiently manage the trees. And the STC will depend on the DPW to maintain a current and accurate tree inventory.

1. Review of current status of Morristown's tree inventory.
 - a. Jeff reported that an electronic inventory was completed in 2010 by an intern using a GPS device with iTree software. Only street trees were inventoried in 2010. There were 3,200 trees documented at that time. The electronic documentation has not been kept up to date since then. The Town tree crew has been keeping paper records of their work and this data has not been added to the 2010 inventory. In addition, the records do not include assigning GPS coordinates to trees.
 - b. Mark Gandy is the Town contact for the tree inventory. He maintains the GIS system and has the most experience with it. Jeff recommended that we contact Mark directly.

- c. STC requires an up -to- date electronic tree inventory in order to manage the community forest going forward; this is essential before any major planting program can begin.

2. Discussion of plan to update and maintain the Morristown electronic tree inventory

Current process: Jeff reported that there are two dedicated DPW employees who make up the Town tree crew: George and Troy. Jeff reported that these guys do their job well and that they are in the trees everyday checking their status and pruning as needed. They also respond to resident requests. They will have to maintain the electronic tree inventory. Jeff suggested that Troy take the lead on this. Jeff noted that Mark Gandy is the employee who manages the tree inventory software. Members of the STC will have to work with Mark to understand what is available, and how we can access reports in the future.

ACTION: It was agreed that Silvia and Joe will meet with Mark Gandy before the next meeting and report back to the STC. They will gather more information on the current state of the tree inventory, the software, and how the STC can get access to it.

STC would like to add park trees to the inventory.

3. Jeff showed the STC a paper copy of the output of the tree inventory from 2010.

4. Group discussion of how the STC and DPW will work together. A clear process will have to be developed. Jeff stated that the DPW will benefit from the STC; the STC will make decisions that the DPW can implement. The STC agreed.

5. Utilities: JCP&L- Jeff said that they had agreed to call us before they do any tree work in town. We should not be surprised by tree trimming. The STC suggested that this has not always been the case.

ACTION: Jeff will tell Stan of JCP&L that Morristown now has a Shade Tree Commission.

6. STC informed Jeff that an employee from DPW needed to take CORE training in order for Morristown to meet requirements for Approved Status by the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. A major objective this year is to meet all of the requirements. One benefit of Approved Status is access to grants. Jeff agreed to have a DPW attend the training in October when it is offered.

ACTION: Tina will send Jeff our email contact list.

Jeff Hartke left the STC meeting at 7:30pm to attend the Town Council meeting.

IV. Rules of Order

Tina: Last meeting we established our quorum at 5, however, we have only 7 voting members. Recommendation to re-establish the quorum at 4. There was a unanimous vote to change the quorum to 4.

V. New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act

a. Tina and Louise informed the STC members about what it takes to obtain Approved Status from the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act and what our current status is:

- State approved Community Forestry Management Plan(CFMP)-Morristown has an approved CFMP that covers 2010-2014. It was commissioned by the Morristown Environmental Commission utilizing a Sustainable NJ grant. It should be updated in the near future.
- Implemented CFMP-this is our remit for the year. We need to update the tree inventory and plant trees in the Fall.
- Annual Accomplishment Report-this will have to be written at the end of the year.
- CORE trained volunteer and employee-Louise and Tina are trained. We need a town employee to be trained. Recommendation that all STC members take the Fall CORE training.
- Continuing education credits (8): Samantha Rothman has credentials that would make her a good candidate to teach some courses. She had offered in the past.

Louise: On Oct 26, 27, 2013 is the Shade Tree Federation meeting. CORE training is available then, as well as other continuing education. Meeting is in Cherry Hill. Anyone attending from STC will be reimbursed for the training.

b. Morristown Community Forestry Management Plan

Discussion on how to prioritize the activities outlined in the CFMP. STC recognizes that not everything can be tackled at once.

Group discussion: The CFMP recommends planting by Ward. This approach consolidates the follow up care making it more efficient for DPW. The STC has

representation from all Wards except Ward 2. STC would like to involve all communities during planting.

A suggestion was made to plant all empty tree wells.

Kristin: 17 year locusts are coming this spring. This event is too stressful for young new trees. Cicadas lay their eggs in tree bark which often damages small branches of young trees. Therefore, the fall planting plan is preferable.

Group discussion: The tree inventory and a fall planting should be key objectives for the year. When does the tree inventory have to be completed in order to have a strong plan for planting in the Fall?

ACTION: Tina will ask Jeff Harkey what their tree procurement system is.

ACTION: Louise will ask Sam for the Shade Tree book referenced in the Community Forestry Plan.

VI. Liasion selection-Planning Board, Board of Adjustment

Tina: One of our roles is to provide advice regarding trees/shrubs during development planning. And to ensure that approved plans have been carried out properly. We need a member of the STC who is interested in reviewing plans, attending meetings as needed, and to report to the STC on current activities. Karl offered to take on this responsibility. STC voted unanimously in support of Karl being the official liaison to these Boards.

VII.

The Town Administration has authorized the hiring of a part-time arborist to support STC activities. The STC agreed that we would like to have a role in selecting the individual, however, we are not sure of the process.

ACTION: Tina to contact Michael Rogers, find out what the process is, what role the STC can play, and to inform the STC.

IV. Other Actions & Misc.

ACTION: Louise will call Alexander McCartney who works at the NJ Community Forestry Program. He has offered to help in the past to perform a statistical sampling analysis that would update our tree inventory fairly quickly.

ACTION: Louise will find out from the mayor's office what the expectation is for the \$100,000 available for planting trees. Is it for planting this year? Are there any specific expectations? Must all of it be used in 2013?

Louise: ANJEC is a great resource for any questions you may have.

Louise: The Arbor Day Proclamation has been accepted by The Mayor's office.

Michael and Kristin will be Communications subteam.

Louise: Sustainable Morristown is hosting *Festival Earth!* on May 19th, on the green. MEC will have a table..The Shade Tree Commission is invited to share space. Kristin will check calendar to see if she is available to attend as our representative. No other members were available to attend this event.

Minutes will be posted online with the town. Kristin Wedderburn is the point person to get them posted.

Next official meeting: May 14 at 7pm. It will be posted on the Morristown Calendar.