

Borough of Phoenixville

Tree Advisory Commission Meeting

March 12, 2018

Attendance: Commissioners – Craig Brown, Joseph Lynch, Joseph Christopher; Borough Representative - Brian Watson; Volunteer - Paul Kusko, John Westerman

Action items in **bold**.

Public Comment:

- None.

February Minutes Review:

- Feb. minutes were approved tonight and are now ready to be posted to the Borough website

Tree Ordinance and Manual:

- TAC has drafted a statement regarding the newly proposed 2018 tree ordinance which was read and approved as the TAC's position. Minor corrections in wording were suggested. Council is moving towards shifting the financial burden for public tree management to the homeowners. In its statement, the TAC unanimously recommends that the Borough not shift the financial responsibility of its trees to the abutting property owner, but should instead maintain its control of the management and the cost of public tree management. The TAC statement on its position will be included with these minutes.

Tree Removal and Replacement Plan:

- Brian wants to start by removing dead and/or dying and large, butchered trees (e.g., PECO pruning). Recent dead trees were found to be infected with a rot fungus. The Borough arborist and the TAC will be looking for signs of this disease and will recommend removal for trees found to be infected.
- TAC also needs to begin developing planting needs. Paul suggests coming up with "block plans." Although bare root trees are convenient, it was agreed that most of the upcoming plantings will likely need to be ball and burlap plantings. **Further conversation and planning surrounding this are needed.**
- **TAC will develop a list of needed removals by late April/early May.**

Spring Tree Planting:

- Order for 25 trees was placed. **Invoice for the trees needs to be forwarded to Brian.**
- Planting event will be April 21st, 2018.
- **TAC will give Brian locations for pre-digging by April 1st.**
- Paul has requested 2 willow oaks to be planted on Virginia Ave (850 Main and 240 Virginia). Paul will talk to Eric Schmidt about purchasing two Willow Oaks.

Budget Update:

- \$121K is in the budget for year 1 of the 12-year replacement plan.
- \$72K included for “regular” TAC recommended work.

EAB Treatment:

- Joseph C. suggests we get multiple bids.
- **Randy will contact Bartlett for a quote for the 2018 treatments.**
- **Randy will send the list of trees to Joseph C. so that he can get a couple of quotes.**

Spotted Lanternfly

- Paul is interested in collaborating with the Green Team in coordinating a conference pertaining to the Spotted Lanternfly infestation. Brian said that the conference room could be used for this and that a Monday or Wednesday would work best. **Paul will contact the Green Team to continue looking at organizing this.**

Collaboration with Beautification Advisory Commission:

- Paul has looked at Joe Rowan Park with Eric Schmidt. Eric will come up with a couple of sketches and may request a couple of Evergreens for selected locations in the park.

Winter Pruning:

- **TAC will continue to work with the Environmental Club to do more pruning over the next few months.**

TAC Membership:

- With Eileen stepping back, there is room on the TAC for another commissioner. Craig will reach out to Susan Dicerchio who has recently expressed interest.

Spring Inspections and Permit Applications:

- 1215 Main Street - removal request; **TAC to reinspect**
- 470 Grant Street - Removal request; **TAC to reinspect**
- 1206 Tyler - removal request; **TAC recommends inspecting this tree in the spring.**
- 2 trees on Emmett that are extremely dangerous (Joseph).
- 253 Morgan - two small trees growing very close together.
- 1222 Garfield - requesting removal of large tree with cavity
- 1277 Tyler - requesting pruning of tree due to large branches that are too close to the house
- 245 High St. - 245 High St. (corner of High and Marshall) - requesting pruning or removal of leaning tree
- 840 Main St. - requesting removal of hazardous maple tree that is falling apart
- 551 Columbia Ave - requesting pruning of low branches growing close to building

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm
03/12/2018

To: Jean Krack, Borough Manager

From: Tree Advisory Commission

Re: 2018 Proposed Tree Ordinance

Dear Jean,

The majority of the newly proposed tree ordinance is good and should be considered, but there is one major provision within it which Tree Advisory Commission strongly disagrees. The central change from the current ordinance to the proposed one is the shifting of financial burden from the Borough to the abutting property owner, and in the process, adding a complicated system of fees for residents. Both the current and the proposed tree ordinance acknowledge the benefits of street trees to all residents, not just to the person whose residence is bordering the right of way where a tree might be planted. By shifting the financial obligations for trees to the abutting property owner, the cost of the Borough's trees will not be shared evenly by all residents. The TAC feels strongly that the Borough should maintain our important urban forest resource as part of its annual budget, and urges Council to treat the Borough tree resource as important green infrastructure.

Since it's reestablishment in 2004, the Tree Advisory Commission has made improvements to an aging and badly neglected street tree resource, and has managed to function in years with adequate, and in some years, inadequate budgets. Building positive relations with residents and property owners has been a major focus of the Commission and relations have improved dramatically. Shifting the financial obligations for trees to the abutting property owner runs counter to these gains and places the property owner and Borough into an adversarial relationship.

With the initiation of the proposed "removal and replacement plan," resident cooperation and acceptance will be necessary for success. The TAC feels that introducing property owner responsibility for financial maintenance of the Borough's regulated trees at this time is counterproductive to the goals of the removal and replacement plan. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council Policy Committee to review and refine additional provisions of the proposed ordinance to make them more aligned with the Borough's tree management needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment upon the newly proposed Chapter 25 "Trees" for the Code of Ordinances for the Borough of Phoenixville.

Sincerely,

The Phoenixville Tree Advisory Commission