

MARLBORO TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMITTEE

Minutes from April 15, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Complex, Room 1

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Ellen Simonetti at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call was taken:

Joanna Boretti—present

Patricia Cleary--present

Terry Ebert-- present

Mary Eng- present

Elliot Gross-- present

Beth Hutter-- not present

Bob Mellert-- present

Pat Ondar-- present

Ellen Simonetti-- present

Shari Spero – CME Associates—present

Iqleen Viridi, Councilwoman--present

Opening Statement was entered into the record by Ellen Simonetti, chairperson:

As the presiding officer of this meeting of the Marlboro Shade Tree Committee, I hereby declare that the notice requirements in accordance with the provisions of the open meeting law chapter 21, P.L. 1995 has been provided in accordance with the annual notice procedures of C 10.428 of said Act. I further order that this public announcement be placed in the minutes of this meeting.

The minutes of the January 22, 2024, meeting were approved as published.

Chair's Report:

1. The Chair welcomed Councilwoman Iqleen Viridi, who will be our liaison with the Township Council, and Patricia Cleary, who is our newest member.
2. The annual recertification with the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry/Tree City has been submitted and approved. Ellen Simonetti and Bob Mellert have already fulfilled the committee's ten hours of continuing education requirements for 2024.

Marlboro's Tree Canopy

1. The Chair asked if there were any comments regarding omissions in the first quarter tree removal permit process. No one at the meeting was aware of any tree removals that were not on the list of permits granted. A copy of the permit that residents receive was distributed to the committee members, and Pat Ondar commented that she found it difficult to understand. Shari Spero noted that the same permit is used for private residents and commercial developers, and that if there were two permits, one for each type of applicant, there would be less confusion. Shari will get back to the committee about that.
2. Terry Ebert reported that he has not yet received a response from the Township regarding their plans to replace the trees that were removed along the sports fields adjacent to the township's recycle center.
3. Patricia Cleary reported that Scenic View Landscaping planted the trees at the Haven Way site last week. She shared photos of the area with the committee. Getting water to the trees has not yet been finalized, but fortunately, there was adequate rainfall for the first week.
4. The committee continues to seek a more robust response to the replanting of trees required by removal permits. Shari Spero suggested that the township administration assign an employee to this task. Ellen Simonetti will follow up with the township administrator.
5. A permit for the removal of a tree at 2 Crine Road has been received by the township. The residence is newly built, and Township approval of the development plan included that tree as a landmark tree. The Committee agreed that since the owner purchased the property with this understanding, the permit should not be granted. Ellen Simonetti will write to the township administration enumerating the committee's concerns.

6. Another opportunity for increasing Marlboro's tree canopy is being investigated. The site of the Champion Beech at the corner of Pleasant Valley and Conover Roads is an Open Space area covered with dead branches and other debris. The SEWA organization, which currently volunteers at the Community Garden, has offered to help clean the area and plant new trees. Patricia Cleary and Joanna Boretti have offered to follow up on their offer. Watering again will be a consideration. Councilwoman Viridi offered to find out if the township has a water truck that can deliver water to the site and to ask for volunteers to schedule regular irrigation.
7. A limited number of free saplings will be available for distribution on Arbor Day, which will be held at the Community Garden and Arboretum on Saturday, April 27, at 10:00 a.m.
8. Joanna Boretti asked for the committee's approval for her project to address the loss of canopy at Greenbriar. Each property was constructed with a minimum number of trees, but over time many of them have died or been removed for other reasons and never replaced. A discussion ensued as to whether owners can be mandated to add trees to their property, especially if they purchased the property without the missing trees. Joanna intends to take up the matter with the Greenbriar board, which oversees the development.

Arboretum

1. Bob Mellert announced that the application for Level 1 arboretum status with ArbNet, the international accrediting agency for arboreta, was approved on February 19, 2024, and that Marlboro Township now has a certified arboretum. It is adjacent to and partially surrounds the community garden at 82 Tennent Road, Morganville.
2. Nine volunteers from Colgate Palmolive will spend their company-supported volunteer service hours at the arboretum on Friday, April 19. They will help with weeding around the trees and putting cardboard and wood chips under them to deter further weeds and lawn mower damage.
3. Ellen Simonetti is arranging for a sign at the entrance to the arboretum. A picture of the proposed sign was circulated at the meeting.
4. A handout will be prepared for visitors. It will contain a brief history and a diagram of the trees in the arboretum, as well as information about ArbNet.

Community Garden

1. The Community Garden/Arboretum will host an Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, April 27, at 10:00 a.m.
2. There are 26 new families in the garden and two returning families. All the orientations have now been completed for this year.
3. The garden has benefited from the support of volunteer groups including Sewa International, Marlboro High School, and the Girl Scouts of Marlboro.

Announcement:

Shari Spero informed the committee that there is a new state law requiring each municipality in New Jersey to formulate legislation requiring permits for tree removal and enforcement of tree replacement plantings. Marlboro already has such a law, but several committee members suggested that the state requirement may give a little more clout to its implementation.

Next Meeting: Monday, July 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment was at 8:00 p.m.

