

Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2024

Present: Sandy Batty, Phyllis Deerling, Cath Mitchell, Doren Greene, Marnie Vyff, Dan Amato

Meeting Open - Congrats to STC Doren Greene on her lifetime service award!

Approval of November Minutes - Passed as written

Tree Planting Talk w/ Jean Epiphan, Rutgers - Because of the dry fall, there was some concern about planting trees. and as a result of the discussion at the STC November meeting, the STC will not be planting anything in this fall and will push to the fall of 2025. Mitchell Stern had talked with Jean Epiphan, Rutgers Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent to discuss tree planting viability, and Sandy and Mitchell Stern had a follow-up conference call with Jean. She recommended additional native tree species for the STC to consider, and said the STC should plant smaller trees (1 inch caliper in pots) to ensure viability. STC discussed sourcing trees from Pinelands Nursery (NJ) in the future for smaller size options. STC discussed taking a team field trip to visit Cerbos, review options together, and work on a plan for the Spring.

Public Presentation on Trees - Sandy shared materials for a workshop in January where Jean Epiphan is a presenter. Mitchell and Sandy discussed bringing Jean here to do a public presentation (open to the entire town and include woodlands, DPW, etc.) on trees which would help satisfy the CEU requirement. Potential timing could be in March 2025 depending on availability/venue options. Sandy will follow up with Jean to discuss options.

ROW Inspections with the Arborist - Sandy walked with the arborist (John Linson) for a few hours to review trees that STC recommended removing. Arborist provided a report that Sandy is going to share with the rest of the STC. STC discussed the Pine Edge complex and replacing some of the pines with new pines, despite pines not being shade trees. The arborist also placed a lower priority on dead branches.

Community Forestry Management Plan - Next year STC needs to submit a new Community Forestry Management Plan. Sandy inquired with the arborist if he would be interested in helping STC write the plan. Sandy contacted DEP about the grants, which are on a rolling timeline. Sandy introduced the arborist to Mitchell to discuss the strategy around executing the Community Forestry Management Plan. DEP may want Mountain Lakes STC inventory to be in I-tree. STC discussed migrating the existing data from the excel inventory into I-tree. Dan agreed to research the application and data migration potential.

CEUs - 3 members of DPW went to Atlantic City to be trained, which came out of the STC educational budget. STC questioned why this came out of STC budget vs DPW and Sandy shared that she will follow up to get some resolution on this. However, as a result, Mountain Lakes is now current with CEUs.

Liaison Reports -

High School - No HS Liaison present, no update.

Other Business - STC discussed January meeting and potential attendance concern. Phyllis mentioned that she would be traveling, but would get started on the Tree City USA application in advance.

Meeting concluded 8:09 PM
Minutes taken by Dan Amato

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