

**Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission**  
**March 12, 2025**

**Present:** Sandy Batty, Dan Amato, Cath Mitchell, Calvin Lee, Roxanne Tavakkol, Tom Menard, Briana Ostrosky (new member), Tony Forman (new member), Doren Greene, Marnie Vyff (via phone)

**Approval of February Minutes:** Minor grammatical corrections by Doren. Passed as corrected.

**Public Presentation on Trees:** Scheduled for April 2nd. STC needs 8 CEU credits by at least 2 different people each year. Each STC member will get 1.5 CEUs for attending, thus satisfying STC CEU requirement. Sandy asked for two STC members to assist in ensuring CEU credits are appropriately handled at the end of the presentation. Doren and Briana volunteered to stay to assist. STC discussed publicity about the Public Presentation - notification is on the town site, and will be in the Borough Blast. Briana offered to post on a local Facebook page as well. Calvin offered to post something in the high school. Roxanne offered to look into the virtual backpack. Tony offered to swing by Cerbo's (and other neighboring nurseries) to see if they would be willing to post the information. STC discussed who would introduce the speaker and Sandy said she would ask Mayor Barnett.

**Community Forestry Management Plan/Grant Application:** Grant application has a line - *do you have an inventory and who did it?* Last time the inventory was completed was in 2001, over 20 years ago. However, STC updates the inventory yearly, so STC has submitted the updated inventory for consideration with the Grant Application and has not yet heard back. The plan is due by December 2025. Roxanne offered her support in navigating the Community Forestry Management Plan.

**Community Forestry Annual Report and Tree City Report:** STC Sandy completed the Forestry Report and submitted it to DEP by the deadline. Phyllis Deering submitted the Tree City USA report as well.

**Arbor Day Celebration:** Phyllis and Cath are meeting with Patrick Higgins, Principal of Wildwood Elementary, on Monday March 17, 2025 to discuss the Arbor Day celebration at Wildwood. STC discussed inviting the mayor (Lauren Barnett) to read the proclamation. They will organize a song/rap about trees for the kids to sing. STC discussed if we should honor anyone this year. Tom inquired about honoring someone from DPW based on their help and support of the STC. Arbor Day falls during the week of the school break, so STC will need to identify a date with Patrick Higgins.

**Seedling Order:** STC historically has provided tree seedlings as part of the Arbor Day celebration. This year, STC would need to pay for the seedlings, which have been free in the past. STC has always had a surplus. Roxanne said that it could be possible to source free seedlings from a local tree service company (Bartlett, Seneca). Cath Mitchell offered to follow up on this.

**Turf Field Plan:** Funding for artificial turf on the “pit” field has been granted by the state to Mountain Lakes. Trees would need to be removed to install. The land that the grant is for is partially Board of Ed land and also Borough land. Town Council is going through the process of notifying the neighborhood, assessing environmental impact (drainage, PFAs, microplastics in turf) of turf fields, and navigating through the land issue first. Sandy inquired about needing to go through the planning board, which could be an opportunity for STC to request tree specific management plans to control what the Board of Ed can actually do. STC discussed the environmental impact of installing turf fields.

**DPW Meeting:** Sandy and Cath met with DPW to inquire about the amount of trees that were taken down as a part of the Annual report. The initial list provided by the Financial Officer was actually the list of trees taken down by the DPW, which is different from the list of trees the STC indicated needed to be taken down. The matter was clarified and considered resolved. Additionally, DEP indicated that none of the DPW members received the CORE training (despite registering and traveling to Atlantic City for the training), and so therefore STC will not be recognized as CORE trained and Mountain Lakes will not receive accreditation this year.

**Liaison Report:**

High School - Not much to report from Calvin at this point.

**Other Business:** No other additional business

Meeting concluded at 8:08 PM  
Minutes taken by Dan Amato