

Mountain Lakes Shade Tree Commission Meeting

April 08, 2026 - 7 PM

Attendance: In Person: Sandy Batty, Mary Giordano, Tony Forman, Briana Ostrosky, Roxanne Tavakkol, Student Liaison Calvin Lee,

Absent: Dan Amato, Cath Michell, Marnie Vyff, Phyllis Deering, Christine Belli, Lauren Barnett

Approval of Minutes: March 12, 2026, minutes were approved as written

Tree City Designation: Sandy reported that The Arbor Day Foundation has approved the application to renew our designation as a Tree City for the current year.

Community Forestry Management Plan & Inventory:

Funding: Sandy submitted the grant request to NJ DEP to fund the inventory and CFMP at the end of March. The maximum amount of the grant is \$20,000 and Mitch Stern has agreed to provide \$6000 from the Borough, which is in the Borough budget. The remainder will be funded by the Shade Tree Trust Fund. The timeline for DEP review of the grant request is unknown. Davey (DRG) shared that the review cycle is usually 2-3 months in their experience.

Planting Plan: We agreed that DRG should prepare the planting plan for \$2,500. Mitchell said that the Borough already has a Storm Preparedness Plan mostly prepared by the utility company. The planting plan includes species selection and quality of vacant sites, which are categorized suitable for small, medium or large trees. The funds for the planting plan will also come from the Shade Tree Trust.

Negotiation with DRG: Roxanne called Andrew Ullman from DRG on April 1st to discuss the cost of the proposal. He explained that the cost was primarily based on the time the arborists would be on site and 100 trees represents a full day's work. Thus, they could not reduce the price of the proposal. They are currently scheduling jobs for August and they can complete inventories year-round, even in the winter.

Treekeeper Software: DRG can host a remote demonstration of Treekeeper for STC and DPW interested parties. We decided to schedule this demo for September/October as STC is busy with Arbor Day preparations and tree walks.

Arbor Day Celebrations: There will be 2 events this year, April 24th at Wildwood for the 1st grade and at the ML library on May 1st @ 3:30pm. The Library will have kids games and an STC table with brochures and material at the library. The Wildwood event will have 4 stations of activities. Briana is the main contact at Wildwood and Briana, Chris and Sandy are working with the Library staff. Other STC members are contributing to planning and participating at the event. Sandy mentioned that we traditionally honor a member of the community at Arbor Day who has made a difference in the protection and maintenance of our tree canopy. Sandy will send out an email to the committee asking for nominees for this honor.

STC Nametags: Tony found custom engraved nametags with a tree silhouette on Zazzle and will order for each person on STC so that we may wear them at the Arbor Day events. Baseball caps and vests with the STC logo will be discussed at a later date.

Lyman Wilson Park Tree Tagging: Roxanne organized a field trip to Frelinghuysen Arboretum on April 4th to look at styles of tree tags. Sandy, Marnie, Tony, Chris, Roxanne and

Kalvin attended and walked the “Big Tree Tour” and we finished with coffee and treats in the picnic area. It was a fun and informative outing with beautiful weather. Calvin will create some mock-ups at Makerspace based on the dimensions of the tags that we saw. We agreed to include only the scientific and common names on the tags and have them made as hanging tags.

Tree Walks: Sandy will follow up with DPW for their list of what trees have been removed or pruned based on our recommendations from the STC tree walks last year. STC members will follow up in their respective sections to ensure that the work has been completed. Sandy will distribute the revised Excel inventory. Tree walks should start as soon as the trees have leafed out this year and the goal is to complete the walks by July 31st.

Boulevard Tree Pruning: Pruning is needed for the young trees planted along the Blvd walkway as there are many smaller branches at eye level. Roxanne will work with Cath to organize a group of STC to prune these smaller branches this spring.

AOB: Mary attended a tree selection and planting class that earned CEU’s for STC. She will distribute the presentation to STC members via email. Sandy will add Roxanne as a 2nd recipient to the STC email inbox.

Minutes taken by Roxanne Tavakkol