

MARLBORO TOWNSHIP SHADE TREE COMMITTEE

Minutes from October 21, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Complex, Room 1

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Ellen Simonetti at 7:05 p.m.

Roll Call was taken:

Joanna Boretta—present

Patricia Cleary--present

Terry Ebert-- present

Mary Eng- present

Elliot Gross-- present

Beth Hutter-- not present

Bob Mellert-- present

Pat Ondar-- not present

Ellen Simonetti-- present

Shari Spero – CME Associates— not present

Iqleen Viridi, Councilwoman—not 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 July 15, 2024, meeting were approved as published.

Chair's Report:

1. Ellen Simonetti shared that next year's budget has been submitted to the township. She also said that by the next meeting she will have submitted the committee's end-of-year report to the township and the annual report to New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry.
2. Before the next meeting current members of the community garden who will be invited back for next season will be informed and billed. A new computerized system will be in place for registration and billing.

Marlboro's canopy

1. Members of the committee are again reminded to scan the list of tree removals for the previous quarter as the reports are issued by the township. If they have seen any activity that is not listed on the township report, they should inform the committee so that action can be taken. There has been good progress by the township in tracking down compliance with the requirement to plant replacements. So far, about 67% of residents who have been contacted have done the required replanting. The committee was pleased with that result.
2. Ellen Simonetti and Patricia Cleary reported that the Champion Tree site on Pleasant Valley and Conover Roads has been cleaned up, thanks to a SEWA volunteer group and the DPW. The old farm site now looks so good that Patricia Cleary suggested that we recommend keeping the location as it is, without additional plantings. The committee agreed unanimously.
3. The Smith farm location has been designated by the Open Space Committee as a possible site for additional tree plantings. The committee agreed with Patricia Cleary that this was their project and that the Shade Tree Committee would not be involved. Ellen Simonetti noted that the township's tree planting fund is available to all committees, not just Shade Tree.
4. Ellen Simonetti drafted a proposed letter to various homeowners' associations requesting that they notify their residents of the township requirement to obtain a permit before removing trees. A discussion ensued regarding how the requirement would be enforced and who currently holds the responsibility for compliance.

5. The committee focused their immediate attention on the Greenbriar community, which is where Joanna Boretti lives. She has offered to spearhead the effort to replace multiple trees that have been removed over the past several years. The committee recommended that, for starters, she focus on trees removed along public rights-of-way.

Arboretum

1. Four new trees were planted this fall, and a volunteer watering crew of members from the community garden is keeping them hydrated during this drought.
2. A copy of the handout that has been developed for visitors to the arboretum was circulated.
3. Plans for the future include an identification tag attached to a branch of each tree (instead of at ground level, where it is often destroyed by lawn mowers) and a QR code that will give the user more information about it.
4. A tour of the arboretum is being planned, along with a tour of the community garden.
5. Memorial trees will be accepted in the garden, contingent upon space. Terry Ebert recommended plan to coordinate plantings in the spring with the official Arbor Day tree so that delivery and digging might be done at the same time for all of them.

Community Garden

1. Ellen Simonetti reported that there will be some changes in the rules and regulations for the garden next year. They will, among other things, address the issue of responsibility during a plot owner's extended absence from the garden during the growing season.
2. Funds for new compost bins have been added to the budget. The current bins are beginning to disintegrate from use and age. This project will require the assistance of many volunteers when the project has begun.
3. The Township administration is transitioning to on-line registration for garden membership.
4. Three girl scouts completed their Bronze Award project in the garden and helped to grow nearly 200 pounds of food for local food pantries. And a boy scout is considering the garden for his Eagle Scout badge.

5. Next Meeting: Monday, February 24, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment was at 7:50 p.m.

