

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP TREE COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Monday, November 17, 2014

5:30 pm

I. ATTENDANCE

The Tree Commission held its organizational meeting and first ever regular meeting on Monday, November 17, 2014 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

Commission: Marc McDill, Chairman
Mike Jacobson, Vice Chair
Troy Bayletts
Jackie Esposito

Staff: David Modricker, Director of Public Works
David Pribulka, Assistant Township Manager

Others in attendance included: Heather Bird, Recording Secretary; Elliott Killian, Board of Supervisors member

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Modricker called the Monday, November 17, 2014 Ferguson Township Tree Commission meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

III. INTRODUCTIONS

The staff and Commission members introduced themselves.

Mr. Modricker has been with the Township since 1999 as the Public Works Director. As the Township continues to grow the need for a Tree Commission and an Arborist has grown. He will be the staff member on the Commission.

Mr. Bayletts graduated from Penn State in 2011 majoring in Forestry. Being a member of the Commission fits well with his field of study.

Mr. Jacobson is currently a professor at Penn State. He works mainly with the rural side of trees and forests. He does research on a variety of forestry topics. His interest in the Commission has to do with preventing Oak Wilt type diseases in the future of the Township.

Ms. Esposito is currently an archivist for Penn State and works with the historical tree group for the University. Her interest with the Commission includes seeing that the rules regarding trees and forests be enforced in new development areas.

Mr. McDill is currently a Forestry professor at Penn State. He was a member of the State College Borough Tree Commission where he helped with updating their ordinance and development of their current urban forest plan. Being a member of the Commission is a way to help out and make a difference in his community.

Mr. Pribulka has been with the Township for a little over two years as the Assistant Township Manager. He joined the meeting as an observer for the first Tree Commission meeting.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIR)

Mr. Jacobson made a motion to nominate Mr. McDill for the position of Chairman. Ms. Esposito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McDill made a motion to nominate Mr. Jacobson as Vice Chairman. Mr. Bayletts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. REVIEW ORDINANCE CHAPTER 25 TREES

Mr. Modricker began with a review of an ordinance that created Chapter 25 Trees.

The following are acts that the Tree Commission will perform: adopt bylaws, review planting contracts prepared by Mr. Modricker, review planting plans for subdivision and land development plans, and establish the meeting dates and times and the need for a subcommittee. Mr. Modricker and or the Township Arborist will be present at the meetings.

Mr. McDill asked how many plans the Township receives. Mr. Modricker stated that currently there are nine plans under review.

Planting plans for large development plans will be brought before the Commission. Mr. McDill suggested for the smaller plans the information may be circulated by email. Mr. McDill clarified that with subdivision and land development the overall tree planting plan is created with the first submission. Mr. Modricker stated that each phase of a final plan will have a tree planting plan. Mr. McDill stated the tree planting should be re-evaluated to avoid problems like those in Saybrook with the Ash tree plantings. Ms. Esposito questioned if this ordinance would cover trees that are planted but did not survive. Mr. Modricker stated that any tree located within a right-of-way is guaranteed for one year from final inspection of the tree planting.

Mr. Modricker continued with the ordinance review. The commission will prepare annual reports, work plans, budgets, and assist with preparing and accepting grants. The Commission is an advisory board. The decision of the Commission can be appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 10 days.

Mr. Bill Elmendorf was contracted to inventory, with GPS, all of the Township trees.

In addition to reviewing private and public land development plans, the Commission will also review proposed tree planting plans for public improvements to parks, plazas, streetscapes, public spaces and have the authority to propose changes.

To facilitate review of all private and public land development, the Public Works Director may establish a subcommittee comprised of two members of the Tree Commission and the Public Works Director. The Commission discussed the need for a sub-committee. Depending on the volume and project the full commission may participate through email.

Section five dealt with hazard and nuisance trees. This section gives the authority to the Public Works Director to authorize removing a tree that displays imminent danger.

With potentially hazardous or diseased trees the Tree Commission may order the pruning or removal of trees of probable or possible risk by certified mail, return receipt requested.

The ordinance includes a section for protection of public trees, restitution, permits for planting, removal and pruning of public trees. The Tree Commission will review and recommend for approval or denial all permit applications for the planting, removing and pruning of public trees requested by property owners. Also included is a section covering replacement trees, easements for planting trees and violation and penalties.

VI. REVIEW RESOLUTION 2014-24 APPROVED TREE SPECIES

Mr. Modricker stated this resolution was put together by Mr. Bill Elmendorf and includes an approved list of plantings for large, medium, and small landscape areas. Mr. McDill asked if the resolution can be modified to include additional tree options.

VII. REVIEW RESOLUTION 2014-25 STANDARDS FOR ARBOR WORK

The resolution contains arbor standards to be followed by anyone performing work on street trees. This resolution will be reference in contract documents as the Township Standards for Arbor Work. The resolution discusses protecting trees. The Public Works Department continues to learn through the new ordinance and resolutions on what will be expected with public trees.

Mr. Bayletts asked if the resolution included information for new developments and existing trees. Mr. Modricker confirmed that the resolution does include preserving any worthy trees.

VIII. DISCUSS REVIEW PROCESS FOR STREET TREE PLANTING PLANS SUBMITTED WITH LAND DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION PLANS

Mr. Modricker confirmed that initially the Commission would like to handle the review as a group through email for planting plans. Mr. Modricker stated the concern is to keep the process moving forward while reviewing the plans. Mr. McDill questioned who else reviews the plans. Mr. Modricker stated staff, Planning Commission, Emergency Services, Township Solicitor and transit all review these plans. Mr. McDill confirmed that the Tree Commission will be the only authority looking at the removal of existing trees. Mr. Modricker stated this would be important with wooded lots that are sold for home development.

IX. DISCUSS TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. McDill reviewed items the Borough Tree Commission handled as a suggestion for future meetings. The Borough Commission reviewed the tree removal and plantings for the year. Once a year the Commission would review all of the trees on the removal list and plantings for the year, and all of the home owners were notified about the suggested installation of street trees. One time a year the Commission held a meeting to determine all of the final removal and plantings for the year. The Commission also looked for planting opportunities and established a tree planting plan.

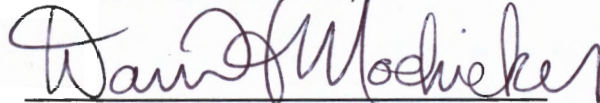
X. ESTABLISH FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TIMES

The Commission decided to hold monthly meetings on the third Monday of the month at 5:30 for a six month period. At that time they will determine the future meeting times.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the November 17, 2014 regular Tree Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "David Modricker", is written over a horizontal line.

David Modricker, Director of Public Works
For the Tree Commission