

NOTES OF THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION MEETING
July 19, 2016

Present: Jim Bower, Staci Jasin, Christina Leslie, Shirlie O'Leary, Carl Pike, Robert Shenk, Mimi Shapiro, Douglas Smith

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

The minutes of the May 17, 2016 meeting were approved (moved Shapiro, seconded O'Leary).

Old Business

22-16 The Commission denied the request to remove the blue spruce at 723 N. Franklin St., on the E. Frederick St side (moved Jasin, seconded Shapiro). The tree is within the 12 foot right of way, which extends almost to the house. The owner wanted to remove the tree in order to install a fence, but was informed that a fence could not be located in the right of way. The tree is in very good condition, and there is no damage to the sidewalk. There are no overhead wires. Bower will inform the owner about pruning the shrubs that extend over the sidewalk on E. Frederick St. and planting a tree in the empty well (which must be enlarged to meet specifications) on N. Franklin St.

23-16 The Commission denied the request to remove the red maple at 459 Fremont St. (moved Leslie, seconded Shapiro). The Commission and staff had been informed by the owner of 457 Fremont St. (Mr. Jairo Velasco) and his representative that roots from this tree had caused sewer blockages and that the sewer lines for these two houses join under the sidewalk to a common lateral to the sewer main. The owner proposed to remove the tree but only intended to replace a few feet of the sewer line near the house, where the blockage was. Removing the tree did not seem necessary if that was the only work to be done, though removal might be necessary if the entire sewer lateral to the main was to be replaced, along with separating the laterals for the two properties. The issue of the common sewer line should be referred to the proper city agencies. It was recently learned that a few feet of the lateral near the house had been replaced and the owner did not wish to remove the tree.

New Business

24-16 The Commission approved the request to remove the Bradford Pear at 814 Hager St. (moved Leslie, seconded Shenk). The owner, Jeffrey Schober, said that the tree is splitting at the branch unions with the trunk and that another pear on the eastern side of his property split apart earlier this year. There is no evidence of damage from vehicles. Bower said that the tree's life might be extended by a few years with a through-rod and cable, but eventually it would split apart given its structure. There are no overhead wires. The planting strip is 3 feet wide and the sidewalk is 4 feet wide. Bower will discuss replacement species for both trees with the owner; medium (or

possibly large) trees would be appropriate. Bower will determine the right of way distance, and will advise the owner about a radius in the sidewalk at the site of the western tree, although the bank may limit that. At the site of the eastern tree it may be possible to install a larger sidewalk radius (using existing timbers) given the nature of the slope; the required sight line distance at the corner will be determined before a planting location is determined. The owner was advised not to construct wooden boxes around the trees as that constrains and weakens the root system. The Commission noted the lack of a proper curb at the western site and damaged curb at the eastern site.

25-16 The Commission tabled the request to remove the sweet gum at 628 Hilton Dr. (moved Shenk, seconded Shapiro). There is evidence that something has been injected both high and low into the trunk recently (holes, liquid oozing down the trunk, strong odor detected, possible flagging of one branch). Bower will attempt to determine what was done and by whom. The tree is otherwise in very good condition. There are no wires. The sidewalk was replaced fairly recently, but it is being raised by the root flare; the 3 new blocks were not separated by expansion joints. If the tree were to be removed, substantial sidewalk work would be required. Also, the proposed location (at the east side of the property) for the replacement ginkgo tree has only a 2 foot wide planting strip, so substantial sidewalk work would be required to create an appropriate planting area. Although the Commission recognizes that the sweet gum fruit can be an annoyance, sweeping them would be far simpler and less expensive than the owner's proposed solution.

26-16 The Commission rejected the request to remove the red maple at 716 Emerald Dr. (moved Shenk, seconded Jasin). The owners, Frank and Jacqueline Cassarino, said that the tree is overgrown, has dead branches, has carpenter ants, and continually drops small twigs and branches. The surface roots in certain locations make getting into and out of the car difficult. There have been two sewer blockages due to roots in a year. The only overhead wire is one from the back of the property to the street light; PPL does not prune around such wires. The sidewalk is in very good condition. There is a 3 foot planting strip and a 4 foot sidewalk. The Commission recommended that Bower advise the owners about and issue a permit for removing the dead wood, cutting back branches that are over the house and elsewhere, and pruning away branches that are blocking the street light in order to improve safety. Also, they should use Root Kill in the sewer line and (once the dead wood has been removed) apply an ant-killing product to the soil. Carpenter ants only attack dead wood and do not threaten the tree. Bower will also advise about the surface roots and access to parked cars. Once the necessary pruning is done the tree will be in good condition.

Discussion Items

1. Arborist Report

- There are several young trees dying, particularly in downtown. Though no cause is obvious, salt damage from plowing streets curb-to-curb and piling snow on the sidewalks is a possibility.

- Ashes in the parks and on streets are being treated. Given the workload, a contractor may be hired to take on some of this work (using grant funds). There have been no reports of emerald ash borers this year in the county and no signs of the borers have been seen in trees being removed. The large ash at the Wolf Museum was removed. Davey Trees has begun removing 35 street ash trees in the next few weeks; they will also do stump grinding. Plans and budgets for the replacements will be presented at an upcoming meeting.

- Of the newly planted trees, only 2 trees in the Northeast and 1 tree in the Southwest have died. This summer is shaping up to be very stressful for trees.

- Owners of newly planted trees (through the regular city program or through Lancaster Tree Tenders programs) are being reminded about watering. Interns have distributed door hangers modified from existing ones. A purpose-made hanger will be developed soon.

2. Update on Lancaster Tree Tenders.

- Interns working with the city and with the Lancaster County Conservancy are identifying possible tree planting sites in the Southwest area that is targeted by the Lancaster City Alliance. About 400 letters have been sent out. Financial support has been offered by Two Dudes and E. Chestnut St. Mennonite Church; other commitments are being sought. The ideal goal would be to provide the trees for free; we are about at \$100 per tree committed. There is a good “work flow” for the entire process of identifying sites, securing money, reaching out to owners, and arranging the planting with volunteers.

- On National Night Out, August 2, there will be an information table in the Northeast area to encourage more tree planting. In the Southwest area that is targeted by the Lancaster City Alliance, volunteers will be going door-to-door to follow up on letters seeking property owners to agree to plant a tree. At its next meeting the group will discuss a crowd-funding effort to raise money for tree planting. A short video will be produced by a local firm, to be selected.

3. Shade Tree Commission annual report.

- Members were asked to provide suggestions for topics for the 2015 report and for ways to enhance the appeal of the report, such as with photos. Leslie will provide

text about the Northeast planting effort, with preliminary data from Smith about the cost savings to the city from the volunteer effort.

4. Information for Commission

- Pike mentioned the Morris Arboretum Tree Canopy Conference (“Preserving Trees in Our Communities”) on October 13, 2016 at Haverford College and encouraged members and staff to attend for valuable information and updates on community trees.

- A flyer distributed in Washington, DC to owners of new trees was shared. This could be a model for similar material here.

- A tree information display from Moscow, Idaho was presented. The Commission and Lancaster Tree Tenders could develop a similar display for use at public events. Jasin volunteered to take on this task, and others interested should contact her.

- Jasin reported on her work with Thaddeus Stevens College and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to develop a curriculum for the READY program, to provide students with knowledge and career skills in the area of storm water management. The program will begin next summer. It could be linked to the efforts of the Lancaster Tree Tenders.

5. Ongoing concerns about trees

- When trees are planted under power lines, often a small tree is selected. There is thus little benefit in terms of storm water mitigation or saving cooling energy. An alternative would be to plant a medium or large tree, recognizing that after a few decades it would have to be substantially pruned or even removed, but that there would have been greater benefits from the larger canopy. A downside is that the owner would be obligated to pay for the replacement if required. Bower noted that there are medium sized trees that could be planted and would require only minor pruning by PPL. At certain sites with a large building setback, such as the Lord’s House of Prayer on E. Vine St. recently discussed, even a large tree (ginkgo in this case) can be planted. It was agreed that options such as this should be pursued whenever possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Next meeting August 16, 2016, 7:30 PM