

**FERGUSON TOWNSHIP TREE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2018
5:30 PM**

I. ATTENDANCE

The Tree Commission held its public meeting on Monday, January 28, 2018 at the Ferguson Township Municipal Building. In attendance were:

COMMISSION:

Howard Fescemyer, Chairperson
Darlene Chivers, Vice-Chairperson
Mike Jacobson
Marc McDill
Scott Pflumm

STAFF:

Lance King, Arborist
David Modricker, Public Works Director

Others in attendance were: Marcella Bell, Recording Secretary; and Mike Beury, Cutting Edge Tree Professionals

II. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Fescemyer called the Monday, January 28, 2019 Ferguson Township Tree Commission meeting to order at 5:37 PM

III. INTRODUCTION OF SCOTT PFLUMM

The FTTC welcomed Mr. Scott Pflumm. He introduced himself and stated that he was very happy to serve on the Tree Commission.

IV. ELECTION OF CHAIR PERSON AND VICE CHAIR

Dr. Fescemyer turned the meeting over to Mr. Modricker who asked for nominations from the floor for the 2019 Chairperson. Ms. Chivers nominated Dr. Fescemyer to remain Chairperson in 2019. The vote was seconded by Dr. Jacobson. The vote for Dr. Fescemyer to remain Chairperson carried unanimously.

Dr. Fescemyer asked for nominations for the 2019 Vice Chairperson. Dr. Jacobson nominated Ms. Chivers to remain Vice Chairperson in 2019. The vote was seconded by Dr. McDill. The vote for Ms. Chivers to remain Vice Chairperson carried unanimously.

V. NOVEMBER 19, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

Dr. McDill stated that he was not in attendance for the November meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Chivers and seconded by Dr. McDill to approve the corrected November 19, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. FERGUSON TOWNSHIP ROAD STANDARDS

Mr. Modricker stated that the Tree Commission has made comments on the

Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDO) and within the SALDO, there are road standards as well as within the Traditional Town Development (TTD) Ordinance. Mr. Modricker referred to the agenda packet, which include pages from the SALDO regarding residential road standards. There are also road standards for arterial and collector streets. Mr. Modricker explained that most residential streets are 26 feet wide with a curb. If the street does not have a curb, it has a shoulder, which is usually the same material as the paved road, however, some neighborhoods have stone shoulders. The larger order streets are to be built according to PennDOT design standards.

Mr. Modricker then explained the road standards for the TTD. The idea for a TTD is that the development is denser, has on-street parking, has narrower roads, and incorporates elements of road diets.

In response to a question from Ms. Chivers regarding street design and stormwater flow, Mr. Modricker explained that on Havershire Drive, the Township installed depressed curbs on the side of the boulevard to allow sheet flow stormwater runoff into the center grass median. He went on to explain that the Township has had issues with motorists driving over the concrete ribbon and on the grass, which then destroys the grass and makes a mess. Then the Township tried to remedy the situation by putting stone down to replace the grass damage. In addition, the Township's Public Works department installed concrete bumper blocks on the concrete ribbon area and installed delineators. Dr. Fescemyer stated that he believes that the area in question is too narrow, which is why cars drive on the grass.

Dr. McDill added that the curbs don't have to be inverted or flat, rather they just need to have cut-outs in the curb. Mr. Modricker stated that he could look at this for the standards for a boulevard. Dr. McDill explained that cut out curbs could be used in residential neighborhoods near retention basins. The cut curbs could be next to a low area with a raised sidewalk with culverts that let the water flow underneath it. The water would then go straight into the retention basin to spread that flow out over more green space. The low area would be an area where water gets trapped before it goes into the basin, where it can infiltrate and feed the trees and surrounding vegetation. The overall goal is to have more places where water can flow, instead of trying to funnel it all into one place and then building a lot of grey infrastructure to handle it. Installing more outlets and using green infrastructure will provide more opportunities for infiltration. Dr. McDill clarified that this idea could be used for future developments, not current ones.

Dr. Fescemyer stated that he attended a seminar on this subject in December, and that most places that are practicing this are in big cities. Most of these ideas are fairly new. The city would take a place like Havershire Drive and develop points to funnel water into and plant appropriate vegetation in the points. These cities usually don't have a separate storm sewer system for stormwater run-off like the State College area does, so they are pressed to take action to fix their stormwater run-off.

Mr. Modricker added that the challenges these places are running into is once the water gets to the soil, they have to have soil that infiltrates, which is sometimes an issue in the State College area. Dr. Fescemyer stated that these practices would help increase the tree canopy. Dr. McDill added that these practices act as a filter for pollutants as well. Dr. Fescemyer stated that he will try to find the seminar recording and send it the FTTC and staff. Ms. Chivers referred to a book on Low Impact Design that references a lot of the above ideas.

Dr. Fescemyer stated that the space between the street and the sidewalk (tree lawn) could also be increased so that there is more room for the tree to grow. Mr. Modricker stated that the bigger the right-of-way, the bigger the tree lawn is. For example, a 60-foot right-of-way has a 10-foot tree line area. The typical residential street has a 50-foot right-of-way with two 5-foot tree lawn areas with utilities easements outside of that. Dr. Fescemyer stated that he believes the tree lawn should be a minimum of six feet.

Dr. McDill stated that parking lots are way over designed. For example, the parking lots for Weis and Giant off of North Atherton Street are never full. Dr. McDill stated that he's observed, at maximum, the parking lot at Giant 70% full, but never 100% full. Mr. Modricker explained that parking lot calculations come out of the Zoning Ordinance, but sometimes depending on the development, a parking study is done, which uses localized data instead of the parking calculations.

Dr. McDill stated that bike lanes should be part of the design of every new neighborhood. Mr. Modricker stated that a bike lane can be designed different ways. It can be right on the road (connected to the pavement) as a shared lane, or it can be its own dedicated lane. It can be its own off-lane facility such as a multi-use path. Dr. McDill suggested that pervious pavement be used for the bike lane. Mr. Modricker stated that if the bike lane was constructed with pervious pavement, the soil underneath must be able to infiltrate and there must be testing done to prove the infiltration capacity. The FTTC will provide more comments on this subject at a future meeting.

Mr. King stated that Environmental Planning & Design (EPD), the Township's consultant who is rewriting the Zoning and SALDO, provided the fifth draft on Friday, January 25. Mr. King will provide the dropbox links so that the FTTC may start reviewing the draft ordinances. It is not apparent that EPD incorporated the FTTC's comments from the fourth draft.

VII. TREE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Dr. Fescemyer stated that he requested this item to be on the agenda to begin discussion. He went on to state that he believes a tree canopy survey should be done first to assess the tree canopy coverage in the Township. Mr. Modricker stated that the survey did not make it into the 2019 budget, however, there was a discussion that someone at Penn State has a tool that could possibly measure the tree canopy coverage. Mr. King stated that currently, the Township GIS

technicians have the tool from DCNR and will review the tool to see if it can be used to measure the tree canopy. In addition, the Township had to purchase software to be able to use the tool. The GIS department will start the survey this year. Dr. Fescemyer stated that the next steps would be to talk about the process of creating a tree preservation ordinance. Dr. Fescemyer would like to involve Bill Elmendorf with this process. Dr. McDill stated that it would be useful for Dr. Elmendorf to provide models of different tree ordinances. Dr. Fescemyer will reach out to Dr. Elmendorf for model ordinances. The FTTC would also like to invite Dr. Elmendorf to a future meeting.

VIII. TREES FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

Dr. Fescemyer provided an article to the FTTC regarding free trees for West Cape May homeowners. Dr. Fescemyer explained that the homeowner can put in a request for a tree and West Cape May will provide them a tree. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining the tree on their private property. Dr. Fescemyer stated that it is an idea the Township can consider to deal with increasing tree canopy of private trees. Dr. Fescemyer stated that instead of creating an ordinance that would not allow homeowners to cut down private trees, providing residents with free trees might be an alternative.

Dr. Fescemyer spoke to the details of the program in West Cape May. The trees come from an approved list, the tree is selected for certain areas for optimization, they plant three-inch trees that are seven to nine feet tall, and a contractor plants the trees. The program is funded by proceeds from the farmer's market and tomato festival. Dr. Fescemyer stated that he feels that the funding should not come from tax payer money. Dr. McDill stated that the Township could gain interest by putting an article in the Township newsletter to inform residents that the Township is creating a fund for free trees for residents and ask for donations for the fund. The Township could then use the interest from that fund to purchase trees.

Dr. Jacobson stated that he feels the Township should focus on planting public trees. In addition, he feels that there is no incentive for home owners to maintain the tree. He went on to say that this program could be a part of the tree preservation ordinance, and in addition, the tree canopy survey will tell the Commission where to optimize the trees. Dr. Jacobson suggested that the home owner pay 50% of the cost of the tree, which could garner more interest in maintaining that tree. Mr. King stated that it would be between \$300-\$400 to purchase and plant the tree.

The FTTC will discuss this item again at a future meeting.

IX. MUSSER GAP TO VALLEYLANDS CONSERVATION PROJECT

Dr. Fescemyer stated that there is a meeting regarding the Musser Gap to Valleyland project on Thursday, January 31, 2019. He encourages the FTTC members to go to this meeting to discuss the opportunity to preserve and restore forest land. Clearwater Conservancy and Penn State University have partnered

to come up with a conservation plan for the land.

X. 2319 FALCONPOINTE DRIVE

Mr. Modricker provided pictures of the driveway that were taken that day. After a brief discussion, there was a general consensus from the Tree Commission for Mr. Modricker to send a letter to the homeowner giving him the option to leave the tree as it is or pay for the appraised value of the tree, the cost of removal, the cost of the new tree, and the cost to plant the new tree.

XI. ARBORIST REPORT

Mr. King provided his arborist report, included in the agenda.

XII. COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dr. Fescemyer stated that he received an email from a resident asking about cleaning up pods from a honey locust. He responded back to her and told her that those duties are a part of the Township's Public Works operations. Mr. Modricker stated that he did look at the tree and due to winter operations, Public Works will not be able to pick them up at this time.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the January 28, 2019 Tree Commission meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

David Modricker, Director of Public Works
For the Tree Commission