

RSTC Minutes for March 11th, 2024

Meeting called to order at 1605 hours by Mr. Kissinger, Jr.

Special Notes: No meeting in January and February due to lack of a quorum.

1. Attendance:
 - a. Lester Kissinger, Jr. – City Arborist, Shade Tree Administrator / Chair
 - b. Vacant – Member
 - c. Vacant – Member
 - d. Vacant – Member
 - e. Thomas Ryan – Member
 - f. Pamela S Gockley – Member
 - g. Melissa Ventura – City Council
 - h. David Moodhart - Support
2. Presenters / Guests:
 - a. None
3. Review of the minutes from November 2023
 - a. Motion to approve made by Mr. Ryan, seconded by Mrs. Gockley
 - i. All in favor, no objections
4. Report of permits for 2023
 - a. Removals: ninety-six
 - b. Pruning: twenty-one
 - c. Plantings: sixty-nine
 - d. Treatment zero
5. Report of permits 2024
 - a. Removals: eight
 - b. Pruning: two
6. Arborist Report
 - a. Classes Attended
 - i. EnerGov – on going.
 - ii. Turf and Ornamental
 - b. Letters sent to Property owners for Jan through Feb 2024.
 - i. None
 - c. Notice of Violations Issued
 - i. One for either hazards, pruning, removals or other violations from Jan through Feb
 1. (1) moved to Citation

2. (2) for re-inspection coming up.
3. (5) Cases pending Court for the year of 2023
4. (56) closed cases in 2023

d. Adopt-a-Tree.

- i. 0 – Adopt-a-Tree agreements for Spring of 2024
- ii. 1 – Letter of interest for Spring 2024
 1. Person did not return phone calls and prepare site.

e. Invoices for 2024

- i. 0 – to property owners
- ii. In Housework totaling \$23,550 for the year
 1. Recent work being storm clean up:
 - a. Duryea & Little Hill
 - b. River Rd & Windsor
 - c. Centre & Windsor
 - d. 1800 Hessian
 - e. City Park, Rose Garden
 - f. Duryea Dr below Benny Ramp
 - g. Snowstorm
 - h. Glen Rd
 - i. 500 Chestnut
 - j. 13th St Extension
 - k. 1400 Scott St
 - l. 1500 Oak Lane
 - m. Berks Nature
 - n. 1600 Hill Rd
- iii. Contractor Invoices totaling \$8,679 for the year.
 1. Most recent jobs:
 - a. August
 - i. Cedar St Park (Pruning)
 - ii. Tulpehocken St (Removal Tree of Heaven)
 - iii. Penn St 400 & 500 Block (Pruning)

7. Request for Variance in having to replant.

- a. None

8. Review of Zoning Plans

- a. Mitsubishi Chemical Land Development
- b. Helping Harvest Annex
- c. 108 S. 5th St
- d. 936 N. 8th St

- e. Bern St Car Wash
- f. 1125 Moss St
- g. Reservoir Field
- h. RSD Softball Field
- i. 138 S. 8th
- j. 843-845 Buttonwood St

9. Old Business

- a. Park Assessments
 - i. Mr. Kissinger had nothing to report.
- b. Capital Budget 2024
 - i. Renewal of the Deer Management Plan with USDA
 - ii. Pagoda Tree Removal to accommodate construction.

10. New Business

- a. Budget:
 - i. Mr. Kissinger reviewed the 2024 budget.
- b. Planting Projects
 - i. Schlegel Park
 - ii. Hampden Park
- c. Arbor Day 2024 will be the City's 39th year taking part.
 - i. Tree planting City Park in conjunction with the 275th Anniversary and Time Capsule
- d. Contracts
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states he is working on the Ash Tree Treatment
 - 1. Seeking quotes currently, more to come
- e. Ordinance
 - i. Fee.
 - 1. Will not be moving forward at this time. After speaking with the Public Works Director. In his opinion, he believes a fee will only make the current problem worse. We already have some that do not even secure a permit. If a fee is implemented more people will not obtain a permit and continue to do illegal work.

11. Information:

- a. Mr. Kissinger says the next meeting will be Monday, April 8th, 2024, at 1600 hours.
- b. Mr. Kissinger provides a brief update on the MP3 initiatives with regards to the trail feasibility study and forester management plan.
- c. Grant Application

- i. I have turned over information to the Grant Coordinator to pursue the following grant after the press conference held on Friday, March 1 with the secretary of DCNR at Schlegel Park.
 - 1. The Grant is the Inflation Reduction Act Urban and Community Forestry Funds (USDA Forest Service) - \$4 million available for projects that deliver 100% of the benefits to disadvantaged communities, as determined by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and/or Pennsylvania EnviroScience. No match required; cannot be combined with other Community and Watershed Forestry project types; funding provided on a reimbursement basis for activities as they are completed. The U.S. Forest Service and Inflation Reduction Act will be acknowledged as a funding source for work performed under these grants, including any future signage requirements. Construction activities and equipment purchase (over \$5000 per item) not allowable.

d.

12. RSTC Observations / Concerns:

- a. Moodhart expressed concerns with the Met-Ed pruning begin done in the northwest and in the northeast.

13. Adjournment:

- a. Motion to adjourn by Mr. Ryan, seconded by Mrs. Yevics at 1700 hours.