



## Minutes of STAC Meeting 10 December 2003

**Attending:** Carol Avelsgaard, Ruth Bowers, Arny Galpern, Arnold Henderson, Gary Minkoff, ShayMaria Silvestri

**Call to Order 8:10 p.m.**

**November Minutes** were approved as submitted.

**2003 Middlesex County Urban Forestry Streetscape Planting Grant.** Ruth submitted additional material requested by Urban Forestry (site photographs, map, revised budget) and these were accepted. She is now awaiting the borough's receipt of the grant agreement for the borough to sign.

**CDBG money for tree planting.** Finance Officer Nick Trasente believes we have some remaining money to be spent in 2004 and will contact us when he determines the amount. This can then be used for some of the sites we have listed for the Urban Forestry grant, provided they are in the CDBG area.

**Replacements from 2002 Silagy street tree plantings.** Replacing the failed trees has been delayed; the borough attorney is consulting with the Silagy company.

**Tree City Application.** Ruth is preparing the application. The mayor signed an Arbor Day proclamation that will be framed and posted in borough hall. We have a copy to submit with the Tree City application (probably to be sent via the borough administrator, using expenditure values from Finance).

**Recreational Trails Grant update.** DPW partly completed the retaining wall for the path before heavy snow stopped work. They will resume once the snow melts. Our grant extension gives us until June to complete both path and plantings. A problem was noticed: DPW piled snow from the snow plows across one end of the trail. In a single dumping, the small amount of salt mixed with sand in the snow may not be enough to interfere with our plantings, but continued dumping would both interfere with path construction and risk damaging plants we put in, or risk salty runoff into the adjacent stream. DPW needs to find a different site for any dumping from future snowfalls.

**Recent tree maintenance law.** We noticed a few difficulties in this recently passed law governing private tree work in borough right of way. We reported some of these earlier, but now gave Gary a marked-up copy to show the lawyer who is already examining the law to consider the changes mentioned earlier. The key point is eliminating the requirement for a certified tree expert to do plantings (which are simpler than tree removals and prunings and do not require such expertise).

**Budgets for 2003 and 2004.** We have submitted purchase orders on the 2003 budget, but still have funds and hope to purchase a garden cart. Karen Swaine is seeking purchase information, and we hope a purchase order can still be obtained before year's end. We have not been asked for information regarding 2004 budget requests; Arnold will ask Nick Trasente whether we need to submit something or whether our 2004 request can simply be taken as the same as 2003.

**Annual Report for 2003.** Ruth and Arnold will prepare a report. Either a full report or a brief summary of main items should be given to Gary in time for him to announce our year's activities at the January 6 borough reorganization meeting.

### Other business

- **Membership.** The mayor will be making new appointments to STAC around the end of the year. We would like to identify potential new members for her to consider. We will put notices on the environmental web site (Arnold) and on HPTV (Arny).
- **Contracting.** Gary announced that the borough is exploring cooperation with Rutgers on environmentally sound purchasing. Cooperative purchasing through their "green screening" process may bring both environmental and economic benefit. Highland Park may also become a Rutgers experimental site, where they advise us of new approaches and try out new technology demonstrations. Gary has also investigated state requirements for contracts. Our tree planting projects often fall below the dollar value requiring bidding. This means we may be able to avoid this risky process that has sometimes given us low bidders with poor performance. STAC prefers to find a reliable contractor for a long-term relationship.

**Meeting adjourned 10:25. Next meeting 14 January 2004.**