



Minutes of STAC Meeting, 8 December 2004

Attending: Carol Avelsgaard, Ruth Bowers, Arnold Henderson, Karen Swain
Guests: Gary Minkoff, Mike Rosenberg

Meeting Commenced: 7:45 p.m. **November Minutes:** approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Twin Cedars Replanting. Ruth will talk to the Borough's lawyer about the conditions to be placed on Twin Cedars. Trees should be obtained from our region to assure hardiness, but not necessarily only from Middlesex County. New Jersey (except southern) and New York State is sufficient.

CDBG Grant. Arnold submitted to the Borough a request for funds to plant 25 trees in eligible blocks.

STAC Budget. We have \$270 left after subtracting Shade Tree Federation attendance by Carol. We agreed to use some or all to send one or two DPW employees to a \$150 day-long Urban Forestry course training municipal employees to use a computerized tree inventory. Gary will investigate. If funds are still left over after this, Gary will find out if they can be earmarked for purchases early next year (native plants) for the Native Plant Reserve. If the purchase needs to be by the end of 2004, we could buy camassia bulbs (suggested by Karen) and two or three hand clippers.

Tree Pruning Update. Carol and Karen did much of the North Side, removing tree ties and pruning branches to prevent interference with pedestrians or vehicles. Three trees seen to have problems were referred to Ruth for a second opinion before passing the addresses to DPW if action seems warranted. Rob Roslewicz will be doing parts of South Side (plus Denison Street).

NEW BUSINESS

Grant for Tree Inventory Update. Mike Rosenberg, chair of the Environmental Commission, presented a draft grant application, as worked out with Carol and Arnold. The original inventory was conducted 1995-1998 with state grants to the Environmental Commission, so we hope to finance the 10-year update due in 2005 through another grant from the same source. A certified tree expert familiar with the state-designed inventory and database would be the contractor. Exactly what data would be collected would be worked out in conjunction with DPW, members of STAC, and the CTE. We hope to update the whole town in one year (rather than the three years of the initial inventory) since much of the data on older trees needs no reentry, and new data can perhaps be simplified so as to collect only what is useful.

Cool Cities Grant. Locations have not yet been decided for the 50 trees to be planted in 2005 under this program for urban hot spots. The limo lot park was discussed as one possible site.

Bat Houses. The local 4H has donated three bat houses for the Native Plant Reserve. Since bat houses are best placed rather high on trees, we hope to get the DPW cherry-picker in January.

Meadows Trail Possible Grant. The Borough was once awarded a Recreational Trails Grant for trails around the lower meadows. This was used for the trail to Donaldson Park alongside DPW. Now that the DPW trail is finished, we can again apply for clearing a simple dirt path around the lower meadows. The funds would hire workers and perhaps purchase equipment (brush cutter?). Gary will check on Borough willingness to apply and to make the required match (in kind: labor by volunteers and DPW). Carol will check brush cutter prices.

Tree City USA Application. We received forms. Carol will prepare this annual application, contacting the mayor's office for the Arbor Day proclamation and the administrator for tree expenditure records.

Asian Long-Horned Beetle. We agreed that next spring is the time we should make residents aware of this pest, now approaching us from northern New Jersey. We could distribute flyers. Arnold already has suitable flyers in the Street Fair file and the library Environmental Information file. Karen will see if agencies can supply us with copies of those she finds useful. If not, we could print copies.

Our goal would be to encourage residents to check their yard trees and generally watch out.

Adjourned: 9:05 p.m. **Next Meeting:** 12 January, 7:30 p.m., Borough Hall, lower level.