



## Minutes of STAC Meeting, July 13, 2005

Attending: Ruth Bowers, Arnold Henderson, Gary Minkoff

Meeting Commenced: 8:15 p.m. June Minutes: approved

### OLD BUSINESS

Native Plant Reserve. The 4H Club recently weeded and mulched the center display bed. It is possible that individual families may later come by, provided STAC can have someone there to point out what needs doing. Also at NPR, Arnold added signs for the latest plantings and spread sulfur in mugwort areas to acidify the soil, which Ruth heard discourages mugwort (at pH 6.5 and below).

Street Trees. September will be the time for our inspection of last year's plantings in time to notify DPW if any seem dying and may need replacement under the contract's year warranty. We would also cut wires (with cutters we can borrow from DPW) and trim low branches that threaten to grow out to interfere with pedestrians or vehicles.

Tree Law Revisions. Recent concerns by residents about tree/sidewalk conflicts give us an occasion to review the actual ordinances and notification procedures to see if we can propose language for allowable exceptions to preserve trees from removal or root grinding. The Street Tree Master Plan suggested such flexibility. Methods could include curving the walk, using cutouts, concrete grinding to fix minor lifting of slabs, or reducing the width of replaced walk below the ordinance's 48 inches (from BOCA code, but ADA requires only 36 inches). To encourage owners to do such things (despite possible added cost) the Borough might consider paying the *incremental* cost of a curved or otherwise modified walk compared to a straight one. This might even save Borough money if it avoided the cost of tree removal or root pruning. If we suggest this, the borough should have comparative figures and some sample addresses from the current program to see what could be done differently. The next sidewalk repair program is expected 2007.

### NEW BUSINESS

Valley Place Ravine. Water Watch plans another pair of work days, this one primarily for invasives removal in preparation for plantings later in the year. Their summer leaders Jessica Gentile and Michelle Huang will be at the next Environmental Commission meeting (July 20) to further the arrangements. As of right now, the restoration is scheduled for Friday, 7/29 from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7/30 from about 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and STAC members are invited. Water Watch also set up a web site just for the Valley Place Ravine Restoration; see it at <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mnh223/>.

Weed Wrench. We decided to purchase a second weed wrench if funds permit. This would allow large groups such as Water Watch to use two at a time. Arnold will check.

Buck Woods Tree Clearing. The Borough is pursuing action. Apparently the cutting of two problem trees was authorized because they threatened neighboring property, but a larger area was cleared, near the start of June. Facts are still being investigated.

Meeting Adjourned 8:45 p.m. (but with continuing informal discussion). No August meeting. Next meeting September 14, 8 p.m., lower level, Borough Hall.