



## Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission

February 20, 2025

### Minutes

Members in Attendance							
	Lisa Ceoffe		Nazin Bagherynejad		Clara Kitongo		Dr. Brian Wolyniak
	Jim Barry (remote)		James Stitt		Angie Martinez		Zinna Scott
	Guest: Isabella Gross, City Planning		Guest: Michael Kelley		Guest: Zachary Spodek		

#### Old Business:

Lisa opens the meeting and says she reached out to the Mayor's office on February 12 to gain insight on current onboarding process. She has received no response back. Asks members for any names regarding Chair position.

Zinna nominates Lisa as permanent Chair.

Nazin seconds.

Angie asks for discussion and says that the Commission is still facing the same logistical issues (onboarding, getting people to take on additional responsibilities). Lisa says she is just following up with discussion of finding a permanent Chair by March. One issue Lisa has conflicts as a Forester is with matters that require Shade Commission vote. Angie says the person in the role should have the liberty to have difficult discussions with the Mayor's Office, which is challenging for an internal candidate. Lisa says that Shade Tree has more internal support than it had this time last year. James says it makes sense for an outside candidate to more easily communicate with Mayor's Office without going through internal chain of command.

Clara asks if Chair position should be someone who works for the City. James says ordinance states Chair must be a City resident.

Lisa says she will continue as Chair until someone decides to step up.

Angie asks Lisa if she would like STC to put a timeframe on getting new Chair.

Lisa discusses climate initiatives in Mayor's office. She introduces Isabella Gross who is from City Planning. Isabella says that the initiatives are part of a multi-city Innovation Team.

#### Approval/Meeting Minutes-November:

Lisa asks if there are any comments or changes to Nov. 21, 2024 minutes.

No comments or changes are stated.

Lisa asks if there is a motion to approve minutes.

Zinna moves to accept minutes as is.

Nazin seconds.

All in favor. Motion passes.

**New Business:**

Lisa discusses NFL draft. and says priority is taking care of tree pits where an influx of people will be visiting, such as South Side Works. She discusses federal funding issue and is looking for support for tree purchases. Cost will be up to \$75,000 which includes soil, mulch and stake support at various locations:

- 300 restoration street trees
- El Paso Landslide
- South Side Park
- 150 B&B trees
- Enright Park – 70 trees
- Up to 100 requests for tree replacements

Nazin makes motion to support request. Brian clarifies we would be asking for \$75,000. Brian asks about budgeting with \$75,000 ask.

James asks for split of motion, with one focused on draft sites and one on other sites. James says any trees in draft impact zone could be called out separately. Lisa says she already has that in mind.

Brian makes motion to support up to \$75,000 for approximately 300 restoration trees, 150 balled burlap trees at various locations around the city, and supplies including mulch, with tracking of NFL draft specific locations, for possible reimbursement of those sites.

Clara seconds and asks if this includes any maintenance. Lisa says some of it will have watering, but majority will have partner support. Angie wants to note that this is an exceptional time where we are able to pick up work as external partners have picked up the work in the past.

Michael comments that our partners have stepped forward in the past to support Forestry's efforts, and now it is our turn to help them.

Angie asks is this how much we normally spend for trees?

Lisa says Forestry usually works with partner organizations, however they don't have the resources due to the federal funding freeze. Partners agreed to help with planting.

Angie states that DOMI is doing sidewalk projects, and asks if by supporting request for funds, will that take away from the funds DOMI receives.

Lisa says no it does not and states that Forestry has a lot of pots to pull funds from, including the DCNR grant.

Zinna makes a motion to approve request.

Brian asks what is STC's current budget balance.

Jim says he expects \$75,000 in STC revenue this year. There is currently a balance sitting in the account, and we should be able to cover the amount requested.

Lisa suggests adding a caveat to motion that if we do get funds from the NFL, it would be called out separately.

Clara asks if we will try to ask the NFL for reimbursement?

Angie states that DOMI will still do projects for NFL impact zones.

Lisa summarizes:

- 70 trees @ Enright Park - \$17,500
- NFL Draft – at least \$25,000
- 100 trees in various locations - \$35,000
- El Paso Landslide - \$7,500-\$12,000 (getting \$5,000 from DOMI)

Lisa says besides spending down funds for Neill Log House and street tree planting, funds should be there.

Angie says there's guaranteed \$125,000/year from ad shelters.

Lisa says Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is able to plant some things, and that up to \$75,000 would cover a myriad of projects.

Brian makes a motion to support up to \$75,000 for approximately 300 restoration trees, 150 balled burlap trees at various locations around the city, and supplies including mulch, with tracking of NFL Draft specific locations, for possible reimbursement of those sites.

James seconds the motion for \$75,000 support request.

All in favor. Motion passes. Lisa abstains.

Lisa discusses Allegheny Commons being certified as an arboretum and that Forestry is working with North Side Leadership to create support for large older trees in that neighborhood.

Lisa discusses her upcoming visit to Washington, DC to meet with elected officials on Capitol Hill to talk about funding for our initiatives and lobbying for money to promote our city and region. Will have face time with Senators McCormick and Fedderman and PA Representative Deluzio. Will also talk to them about how Pittsburgh is leading the country in new and innovative technology. Lisa states that Senator McCormick sat on the Parks Conservancy Board so hopefully he will be supportive.

### **Reports/Community Partners**

Clara distributes handout regarding Tree Pittsburgh's request for support from STC in the amount of \$25,000 to support seasonal tree care from May-September 2025. Tree Pittsburgh's staff will provide routine tree care to a minimum of 500 trees including weeding, mulching, litter clearing, and pruning.

Clara and Lisa abstain from discussion of this request.

James motions to support Tree Pittsburgh Operations not to exceed the amount of \$25,000 for the period of May to September 2025.

Zinna seconds the motion.

Unanimous approval. Motion passes.

Lisa opens discussion on LandForce helping to clear vacant lots. She talks about meeting with Hill District that went well. Forestry is working with them to help with planting projects.

Lisa says Hana added information about the Greening Vacant lots project to Forestry's web site.

Clara says Tree Pittsburgh is working with RCC and City Planning to do tree plantings in Homewood, which requires some door knocking to get trees reinstalled. Lisa says essentially the pitch is a free sidewalk, that would also house a tree.

Michael discusses Utility projects:

- Highland Park Restoration - 2,000 trees and shrubs being installed. Project is out to bid. Waiting for mitigation fees to fund. There will be a meeting with the Highland Park Community Council about historical review of viewshed
- River Avenue – working with Duquesne Light to replant trees in early Spring and get temporary easement of 15 years so that River Avenue can remain a closed corridor and trail and can stay a green canopy

Lisa says Forestry is trying to protect things going forward.

Brian says the Urban and Community Forestry Conference has been delayed until September until things get sorted out.

### **Public Comment**

Isabella Gross introduces herself. She leads City and Parks open space. She has submitted her application for STC membership on behalf of City Planning to replace Marti Battistone. She says City Planning's work aligns with STC's mission. She is happy to be present to listen to our concerns.

Clara makes a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:24am