



MINUTES
ATHENS SHADE TREE COMMISSION
THURSDAY,
APRIL 10TH, 2025 AT 6:00 PM

Streaming is available at www.ci.athens.oh.us/video

1. Establish Quorum
 - Members present: Tristan Kinnison, Michael Lincoln, Gene Deubler, Joanna Sokol, David Riggs,
 - Mike Wood had wrong time; arrive at 7pm.
 - Guests: Ann Bonner and Rob Boehle from ODNR and Shawn McNichol (sp?) from Kontogiannis architects for Blackburn Landing development.
 2. Disposition of Minutes
 - March 13th, 2025
 - Motion to accept: Michael Lincoln Second: Joanna Sokol
 - Accepted
 3. Motion to change the agenda for Blackburn Landing to go first. Motion: Gene Deubler, Second: Joanna Sokol. Accepted.
- Shawn McMickle of Kontogiannis & Associates architects, who are planning affordable housing for a small site near Route 50 and Blackburn Rd. South.
 - Tear down existing house to accommodate construction of 50 units of affordable housing, which the city really needs.
 - Can't meet tree requirement because of the small site and challenging terrain.
 - The site is already zoned R3 which means it could have 80 units.
 - Bank trees that are not able to be planted.
 - Build a shared use path from site to connect to Richland Avenue tunneled under the highway.
 - This will be designed in conjunction with ODOT and built by the city after the construction of the apartment complex.
 - STC suggested incorporating trees into the path to use some of the trees not being planted at the site.
 - Current plan is 2 large trees, 2 medium shade trees, hedges and privacy screening. This is not even 10% of the required trees. (158 in total in requirement)
 - Funding for the apartments is partially with tax credits so they need to start construction next month or ASAP.
 - STC suggested trees along the drive into the site, but there may be a second phase, so they hesitate to put trees where they may not last.

- Ann Bonner made the point that the development is too big for the site. Fully compliant with zoning, which is a constant challenge in Athens because of our topography.
- They are preserving existing trees as much as possible.
- Gene is comfortable with moving forward as long as we can bank trees.
 - Species list – some non-natives trees and shrubs we'd like to change out.
 - They would be open to that. Get a list to them soon.
- Dave will help revise plans between STC and architects via email.
- Motion passed to move forward.

4. Title 33: Tree Permit, Right of Way Issues, Public Land

- None

5. Title 37: Landscape Ordinance Issues

- None

6. Maintenance of the Tree Canopy

- None

7. New Business

- Presentation by Dr. Matlack on Athens Urban Canopy History
 - Athens 32% canopy coverage. Pittsburg 40 per cent. Cincy also near that.
 - Aerial photos of Athens back to 1939. Almost 100 years of history.
 - Imposed a grid and record land use. Geolocate and line it up. Follow back to 1939.
 - 3 distinct areas: Historical center, slopes to north and flood plain.
 - Flood plain, which used to be agricultural, has been most developed, mostly by parking lots.
 - Population in 1900 was 3000. Grew most significantly after the WWII. It's now 27,000.
 - Forests on slopes have grown considerably because they are difficult to develop for commercial use
 - As we have developed, the trees in historical center and flood plain are closer to pavement and buildings, which is not good for the health of the trees.
 - Lawn is now about 12 %, which has diminished. Tree canopy 32%.
 - 1960-1980 a large expansion of pavement and roofs.
 - Constant mortality but not recruitment. Mortality is consistent, new trees get added sporadically. And there is a strong contract between the 3 neighborhoods.
 - Suggest – regularly monitor the tree canopy.
 - We are continuously losing, so we should be continuously planting.
 - Dedicated urban forestry department needed in the city to put together a replanting plan.
- Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
 - Can STC have a voice? Gene volunteered.
 - Megan Jennings is heading it up. Dave will let her know that we're interested.

8. Announcements & Other Business

- Ann Bonner - Tree City USA Awards in Middleport, Ohio, April 17

- Next Thursday. Annual event. Every year a village agrees to host.
- 15 communities, some are oldest in country.
 - 46 years – Marietta
 - Gene may be able to attend. He'll check. (Other members unable.)
 - Thinking about the 4 requirements to remain Tree City.

9. Old Business

- Committee updates
 - a. Communications/website (Joanna)
 - None, except Tristan's name added on website.
 - b. Grants (Gene)
 - New due date is Aug. 27 for the grant.
 - Working with Mary Reed of arbor day foundation.
 - Have a general map of where we'd like to plant.
 - c. Bioblitz (Tristan)
 - April 19 at noon at E. Side Library
 - Walking E side. Citizen Science. Jury-rig a street tree inventory.
 - Issue – right of way map or layer in GIS. Is James Dyer or Megan Jennings.
 - Lot of ROW is prescriptive. From 40s-50s. 40-55' width. Not plated anywhere.
 - AC Engineers – have township roads
 - Go back to county records. Take time and effort.
 - Trying to use I-Naturalist. Rough 50' from center of streets.
 - Less you know about trees the more you get out of the bio-blitz.
- Plans for outdoor gym/bike path planting (Fall Arbor Day?)
- Fall planting. Tristan met with Katherine Ann Jordan – Arts, Parks & Rec
 - She is OK with it. Timing probably in the fall.
 - Try to get Mayor and city folks.
 - Bad soil...heavily compacted in the site by the new fire station.
 - New roundabout at Rt 682 and 56 (White's Mill) intersection. Lot of construction around there. Bike path may be rerouting...they say minimally disruptive.
- Change in contractor qualifications
 - a. DRAFT LANGUAGE: "Under Title 33.01.03 c, the Shade Tree Commission will require all persons or companies hired for pruning, removing, or planting trees on public property to maintain ISA Certified Arborist credentials, or be under the direction of an ISA Certified Arborist, in addition to all requirements under Chapter 11.10,
 - b. This change will come into effect 180 days after enacted by the Shade Tree Commission."
 - Dave Riggs: Only substantial difference is ISA certification. Dave hasn't seen it yet, but he doesn't see a problem. Code office would house it because contractors register with them.
 - 6 months for contractors to get certified.
 - Gene motioned to approve pending comments from Dave. Joanna second. Passed pending comments from Dave.

- Proposed code change updates, moved to zoning
 - Pollinator, invasive species, reclassifying of square footage.
 - Lisa Eliason and city staff made comments. Dave made one change;
 - Number of trees per acre is very high.
 - Comprehensive plan looking for 40%. Oak tree at 150 feet.
 - Currently 250 per acre. 10 trees per acre equals 100% with a little overlap.
 - Change to the board's basic function. STC would be responsible for tree city USA and Arbor Day.
 - Moved pollinator section to Title 9.
 - Lot of mortality and so maybe overplant to accommodate that.

10. Adjournment

- Joanna Sokol motioned to adjourn. Michael Lincoln seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: May 8th, 2025

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