

**Swissvale Shade Tree Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2017**

Members Present: Terry Ward, Kurt Summersgill, Gib Miller, Heather Lyle
Others Present: Borough Councilman Darrell Rapp; Jared Manzo, NMRWA Urban Forestry Manager;
Swissvale resident Kirsten Raether

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m.

Old Business:

Gib reviewed the Tree City USA application process: he submitted the grant application to Celine Colbert at DCNR, and then it was sent to the funder, the Arbor Day Foundation. We have not heard back from the funding organization yet. In Fall 2016, the committee planted 14 trees in Swissvale, via a Tree Vitalize grant (submitted by Jared/NMRWA) and with help from NMRWA staff, Swissvale volunteers, and others.

New Business:

Gib stated that March 17 is deadline for Tree Vitalize grant applications. SSTAC members will work on the grant application online in Google Docs and will finalize the application at the February meeting. We are seeking new requests for street trees from Borough residents. Each proposed site must be reviewed as to sidewalk width, nearby utility poles/wires, access to residences, etc. Tree Vitalize also reviews each location before awarding a grant to plant trees. Some tree requests shall be denied if proposed sites aren't up to standards, and Tree Vitalize selects the types of trees to be planted. To write the grant application, the committee will need the amount budgeted for tree care in Swissvale, plus the Shade Tree Ordinance, a signature from Clyde Wilhelm, and a review by Greg Bachy. Also needed are the completed/signed request forms from residents requesting new trees adjacent to their properties. Kurt is contacting the residents for more information, as needed.

Currently, there are 16 requests for trees from residents, including addresses along Woodstock, Schoyer, Whipple, Milton, Delaware, and more. We need to focus on sites near each other, for planting purposes. Streets such as Woodstock that have lots of rentals create a problem—landlords can be hard to track down, and follow-up tree care can't be guaranteed. More requests are needed.

Gib mentioned the Open Tree Map from DCNR/Celine. Swissvale street trees are ready for viewing and editing by the committee, if we notice discrepancies in online street tree data for the Borough. We should all take a look at this amazing resource. The username is **SSTAC** and password is **Swissvale**.

Jared discussed the new NMRWA Forest Master Plan and its steering committee. Gib is a member of that committee, with Heather serving as an alternate to attend meetings. The first meeting is Feb. 2 at 4:30 p.m. One proposed result of the master plan will be a professional tree inventory for Swissvale, Wilkinsburg, and Edgewood. As lead, Jared is asking for input from the 9 Mile Run watershed communities, and will be doing lots of outreach activities.

Assuming that we get the Tree City USA designation for Swissvale, we need to quickly plan activities to commemorate Arbor Day, which is April 28. Another significant day is Earth Day on April 22. We could host activities on Clean-Up Day or during Community Days, if it helps to tie in with an established event. Terry suggested involving local kids in the event(s).

Gib would like for us to plan a volunteer mulching/tree care day for new street trees in Swissvale that need help to survive. We should note local trees that are in trouble, and suggest these to the committee for future work.

Action Items:

All committee members: write/edit new grant application form online

Gib: forward application to Greg for review

Kurt: update tree request forms and contact residents, as needed

Gib, Heather: attend first NMRWA Master Plan Steering Committee meeting Feb. 2 (only one of us will attend subsequent meetings)

All: solicit more tree requests

All: edit Open Tree Map as we notice problems with data

All: think of ways to commemorate Arbor Day this spring

Next meeting: Weds., Feb. 8 at 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Heather Lyle