



Middletown Shade Tree Committee
47 Academy Avenue, Middletown, NY 10940

Meeting Notes

November 21, 2019, 4pm-5:00pm and 5:30pm to 6:30pm

- Meeting with Mayor DeStefano and Supervisor Chris Brinckerhoff at City Hall, Middletown, NY

Attendees: *Fred Isseks, Renee Stover, Barbara Bonham, Mary Ellen O'Neill, and Kirsten Gabrielsen*

- STC debriefing meeting at Tapped

Attendees: *Renee Stover, Barbara Bonham, Mary Ellen O'Neill, and Kirsten Gabrielsen*

The meeting with the Mayor included an update of the Shade Tree Committee's accomplishments as outlined here:

- Facilitating educational outreach
- Organizing Adopt-a-Park tree volunteers
- Assisting in selection of City trees
- Participating in statewide study with Cornell University on hybrid oaks
- Selecting and installation of ~11 trees in dog park
- Installation of 7 trees in Davidge Park
- Developing long-term planting plans
- Maintaining digital tree inventory
- Identifying invasive plants and pests
- Continuing assessment of City trees
- Collaborating with ReLeaf, a project of the Urban Forestry Program within the Division of Lands and Forests.

Furthermore, the committee presented an outline of "Next steps and common goals" as outlined here:

In order for the Shade Tree Committee to continue its important work in Middletown, it has become clear that a human/personal connection is needed between the Committee and the City. The Shade Tree Committee envisions having a direct connection via a City employee with some, or all, of the following skillsets and interests:

- Assist in coordination and scheduling between Shade Tree and grounds crew. The Committee has found it difficult to organize and maintain volunteers due to lack of information from the City as to when certain tree related work is being done.
- Be willing and able to learn and use the City's TreeKeeper software. The City subscribes to the TreeKeeper software and has access to IT service from Davey Tree who can facilitate training. Currently trees are being removed and the City's tree inventory is not being updated to reflect the changes. It is essential to utilize the TreeKeeper software for proactive maintenance and planning. Data extracted from an up-to-date tree inventory will support future grant application work.
- Have knowledge of trees, invasive species, and our local environment.
- Attend, if at all possible, monthly Shade Tree Committee meetings. Connecting directly with the Committee on a regular basis will enhance and strengthen the work of both the City and the Shade Tree Committee.

Upon discussion with the Mayor and Chris Brinkerhoff it was clear that they both understand and respect the Committee's work, goals and needs. Various ideas were shared as to how we can proceed.

These were the main points discussed:

- Could the City hire a tree contractor?
- Could an arborist be shared with Newburgh?
- Could a form be developed where any tree related work such as tree removals, additions, etc. could be noted and subsequently entered into the Davey Tree Inventory?
- Can a City employee (or someone hired on a part time basis) be responsible for entering data into the Davey Tree Inventory?

In addition, Chris noted that \$30,000 had been set aside in the 2020 budget for tree removals.

The Mayor suggested the Shade Tree Committee prepare a multi-year plan for tree related work in the City parks and areas other than down town itself.

The plan should include:

Which park(s) targeted.

Tree removals needed. This pertains in particular to ash trees.

Pruning needs.

Which and how many trees should be planted as replacements.

Planting plans.

With this information, the City will be able to get bids and prepare budgets. It was clear that hiring outside landscapers will be the way forward as the City does not have enough personnel with the proper knowledge and training to take on tree related work to the extent needed.

Barbara thanked the Mayor for his time, understanding and enthusiasm for the Shade Tree Committee's work.

- STC "debriefing" and regular November meeting at Tapped:

Old Business:

- Work session was held on November 4th work session at Davidge Park & Maple Hill Dog Park. Mary Ellen, Doug, and Barbara installed deer guards on 18 trees.
- Volunteer hours need to be finalized on-line for inclusion in the 2019 Annual Report.

New Business

- ○ Arbor Day Celebration for 2020 – Barbara has contacted the Chair of Middletown Schools' Art Departments re including the Arbor Day Poster competition in 5th grade students' art activities. Potential posters submitted could be included in a School District event during next spring's Arbor Day celebration. This year's poster theme is "Trees feed NY" We also discussed planting an edible fruit tree which could include the planting of a native pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) tree. Mary Ellen will reach out to a 5th grade art teacher to discuss this further.
- Ideas for developing a program geared towards residents and landlords for the benefit of planting trees was discussed. Barbara suggested we perhaps could use the Warwick model and it was decided we try to meet with the Warwick tree folks to learn about their approach.
- Budget "Shade Trees" Further discussion. This item was tabled.

NEXT MEETING:

Celebration and recap of the year Thursday December 26, 2019.
Location & confirmation of date to be determined.

Respectfully,

Kirsten Gabrielsen