

Borough of Crafton Shade Tree Commission
June 10, 2025

Present: Commissioners Nathan Henry, Mary Luxbacher, Sarah Reeder, Karen Benton; Borough officials John Oliverio and Mike Tedesco; consultant arborist Meg Cerveney, and guest Megan Henke.

Call to Order: Chair Nathan Henry called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 13, 2025 meeting were approved as submitted following Mary's motion to accept and Sarah's second.

Pollinator Garden Update: Mike submitted copies of Elizabeth's invoices and reported that she came in under budget at \$478.91 with 6 perennial selections, with an expected delivery on August 18. She will prep the site beforehand and plant a few days after delivery. The pollinator garden will be located along the rear exterior fence line of the community garden, adjacent to the Giving Grove orchard. Mary asked whether deer fencing was planned and offered \$100 from a charitable contribution if needed.

Bird Town Pennsylvania Update: Mike will coordinate with Christin on her Council presentation.

Duquesne Tree Removal Requests: Mike reported that he and Meg did site visits for the tree removal and maintenance proposed by Duquesne Electric: Meg has approved the list. Meg reported that she requested a meeting with Sylvia Mayer-Mack of Duquesne Vegetation Management. She wants to know how many utility routes run through Crafton and to know their Crafton pruning cycle in advance. This way we can align our maintenance schedule with theirs, avoiding overlap and unnecessary expense on the Borough's part when a tree would be considered Duquesne's responsibility.

Tree Removal and Maintenance Requests: Meg is in the process of reviewing all the residential requests for removal and maintenance. She will identify smaller trees that PW can do in-house. She will prioritize the large trees recommended for removal for budgeting purposes. Meg identified a large tree on Creighton that is an urgent removal case. Mary noted that Creighton is an historic street that has experienced a great deal of canopy loss in recent years. Nathan suggested that we specifically target Creighton residents for our fall lawn plantings and recommended that we do a mailout to promote and encourage re-treesing the street. Karen mentioned that she can provide a writeup on our planting program from something she wrote for the Crafton Courier. Mary further noted that some trails are still obstructed by storm debris and Karen reported that the hillside end of the orchard is still strewn with branches. Mike will follow up on this with PW. Mary suggested that the summer hires could be used to clear away the debris.

Giving Grove Orchard: Karen reported that ample rainfall has kept the orchard looking good. She would like to plan a workday in July to weed and mulch the trees and will email everyone to find a good Saturday. Mike will ask PW to deliver a load of mulch in advance of the workday.

General Discussion:

Bumpouts: Mary reported that she continues to weed the bump out beds near the elementary school and expressed concern about plans for their long term maintenance.

STC T-shirts/Vests: Sarah suggested that we provide STC with T-shirts to promote and identify the commission when we do community projects. Meg recommended reflective vests such as those Tree Pittsburgh uses, which are not size-specific and can be passed on. Mike has the ability to order gear such as this. Nathan recommended that we follow up on this idea.

Crafton Elementary School Native Plant Beds: Sarah reported that she and Elizabeth are working on a proposal to create a self-perpetuating student Gardening Club to design and care for the three beds in front of the elementary school, and requested STC's support. The principal is on board. John noted that they should seek PTA approval and that the school board or parent organization should fund it - STC can endorse the project but can't provide financial support. Sarah will follow up and report back.

Borough Parking Lot Trees: Meg surveyed the trees in the lot, which is owned by the fire department, and made recommendations for removals, maintenance, and replanting. She noted that many trees have suffered irreparable mechanical damage and others are sickly because of their restricted growing spaces.. The PennDot ginkoes along the busway have experienced severe mechanical damage and also need to be replaced.

Emily Busway Plantings: Meg presented a list of plantings that would create a naturalized, layered hedge border with seasonal interest. Mary noted that the original intention was to create height and density to reduce noise and light pollution, and expressed concerns about maintenance. She said that, for many years, the Burgesses, whose home is adjacent to the grassy strip, have mowed and maintained it.. Meg will reexamine the area and maps and provide a site-appropriate recommendation that doesn't conflict with the infrastructure but that provides taller, evergreen screening for light, noise, and aesthetic purposes. She said an option is creating an evergreen hedge along the fenceline and mentioned that there are many beautiful evergreen selections. John suggested that we talk about the project area with Christin at the next meeting and then approach the Burgesses for input once we have something more definite in mind. Nathan requested that Meg create a rough budget so we can balance this project with everything else on the table.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Submitted by Karen Benton, Secretary