

AGENDA

Crafton Tree Commission

03/11/2025

Regular Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes 02/11/2025 Meeting
3. Open Tree Commissioner Seat Interviews Update
4. Crafton / Tree Pittsburgh Relationship
5. Arbor Day Events Update
6. DPW Tree Pruning Training
7. Tree City Designation / Bird City Designation
8. Palmer Trees
9. Adjourn

Borough of Crafton Shade Tree Commission
February 11, 2025

Present: Nathan Henry, Karen Benton, Christin Sciulli, Mary Luxbacher, John Oliverio, Mike Tedesco, Steve Crescenzo, Sarah Reeder, and Meg Cerveny

Call to Order: Commission chair Nathan Henry called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and welcomed guests Tree Pittsburgh's Senior Arborist Meg Cerveny and Steve Crescenzo and Sarah Reeder, candidates for the upcoming STC vacancy when John's term expires in March.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January meeting were approved as submitted following Mary's motion to accept and Christin's second.

Tree Pruning Update: John announced that Blystone has been paid for their work. Mike emailed Davey for an update on their work using our revised list but hasn't yet received a response. Mary reported that the buckeye on Steuben has been pruned and expressed concern that the grove at the Mini-Golf seemed to have been trimmed very lightly. Meg said that when pruning for tree health and safety, it's better to do less than more. She said that most trees can be pruned year-round, with the exception of elm, oak and ash, which require winter pruning. She offered to look at photos of trees we have questions about.

Tree Pittsburgh Guidance: Mike summarized our conversation last month concerning partnering with Tree Pittsburgh; Meg has offered to help us with best practices and goal setting to maximize our effectiveness as a tree commission. Mike thanked John for facilitating the relationship through his position as a TP board member. Discussion ensued about scheduling of upcoming spring events in Crafton, including the Tree City U.S.A./Arbor Day celebration and the dedication of the Betsey Martin memorial tree at Crafton Park. Further information about these and other events will be shared at our March meeting. Mary noted that she will have tree seedlings to give away. These are extras from her project to pot up bareroot seedlings with first graders; the seedlings are sourced from PA Game Commission's Howard Nursery. Meg suggested that we apply next year for the TP tree giveaway program for a small fee, to receive larger trees and deer protection.

Goal Setting: Nathan said that educating Public Works on tree pruning/care should be included in our goal setting for 2025, preferably through a workshop. John said that any PW involvement must be in line with union protocol, in which seniority is a major consideration. Mike will follow up with our PW foreman. Meg offered to present an outdoor workshop to include pole pruning and suggested a public location. We will aim for a weekday morning this spring in Crafton Park. Mike related that the focus of his initial meeting with Meg was our pruning list from last year that had become unmanageable. He asked Meg what a high functioning and performing tree commission looks like, and asked for guidance about how to achieve that goal. Nathan said that the fact we're having this conversation is a positive indicator that we're headed in the right direction. He feels it's important to make sure we expend the right amount of energy to showcase our efforts to accomplish our goals. John recommended that we establish the three following goals: 1. Remove, 2. Plant, and 3. Prune.

The following discussion centered on suggesting objectives for our goals.

Remove:

*John recommended that for every removal that we strive to plant a tree, whether on private property or in Borough-owned spaces or parks.

*Meg suggested doing removals twice a year, such as June and December.

*Karen said that with good communication and consistent follow-through, we can be responsive to petitioners through a manageable and predictable removal schedule such as Meg suggested.

*Christin said one of our biggest public relations problems this year was the backlog that developed for both removals and pruning, and that going forward we should at all costs avoid queuing up of requests.

*Mike recommended that we continue to use Blystone for removals since they are so reasonable.

Plant:

*Mary explained that we need to maintain the November deadline for tree requests. The program as established is that the Borough pays for the trees and Public Works plants them. We can provide up to 2 trees per household.

*John suggested that we identify 1 or 2 streets that need front yard shade trees and approach homeowners.

*Christin recommended that we proactively promote this program by advertising in every newsletter.

*John said we should do so in SaavyCitizen and on the Borough website.

*Meg recommended that we promote shrubs for very small front yards, especially pollinator shrubs.

Prune:

*Nathan said that it's very important to get Public Works' participation.

*John recommended that we follow through with a plan to train Public Works and establish a regular pruning schedule on smaller trees, such as 2 days per month between March and November. We would continue to use an arborist company to prune larger trees.

*Mary noted that the ordinance on street trees is only a few years old, and that tree maintenance on the tree lawns is a Borough responsibility; the Borough has yet to systematically fulfill its obligation to maintain these trees.

*John said the issue of using Public Works to maintain smaller street trees on a regular basis could be solved by the Borough actually assigning Public Works the responsibility to maintain these trees and training 1-2 people to do so. STC needs to update the inventory on an annual basis.

*Meg suggested that she might find a volunteer group to update our inventory, and that she may be able to get us access to a software program at no cost. She can also recommend experienced arborists to assess our street trees to give qualified maintenance recommendations, to take the burden off STC members.

*John suggested that, based on our discussion, we develop 3-4 action items or objectives for each of our 3 goals.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Submitted by Karen Benton, Secretary

	green	red	yellow	white						
	9									green = good
	11									yellow = fair
	12									red = poor
	3	1								white = other
	9	2	2							
	7									
	7			1						
	15									
	3									
	7	1								
	1									
	19	2	1							
	5	1								
	12	1								
	6	1								
	10									
	6									
	3			1						
	2									
	4	1								
	3									
	321	28	8	4						
	^^^Which removed? Update inventory/maps before these locations are forgotten									
DBH and quality score	green	red	yellow	white						
@ \$5/tree	1605	140	40	20	1805					
@ \$7.5/tree	2407.5	210	60	30	2707.5					
@ \$10/tree	3210	280	80	40	3610					

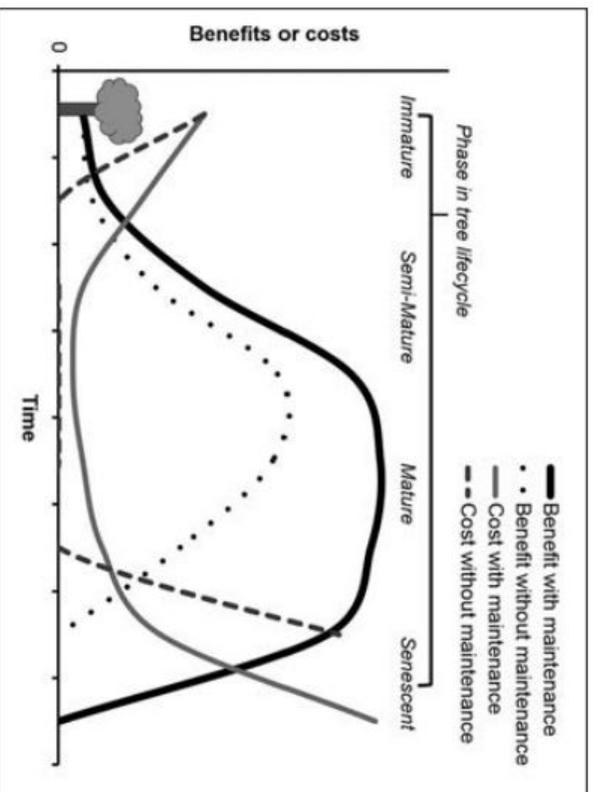


Figure 2. Hypothetical cost and benefit profiles over the life-time of an individual tree (street tree), with (solid lines) and without (dashed lines) adequate maintenance. Benefits are maximized during the mature phase of a tree, and decline rapidly through senescence, while costs show an inverse pattern. Compare the benefits and costs profiles over the course of a tree's life cycle in this figure to the profiles over the tree size classes in Figure 5. Note that the benefits and costs profiles for an individual tree will vary depending on the tree's location, the party benefiting from and incurring costs of the tree, and other factors (weather, etc.). Figure modified from Vogt et al. (2014).

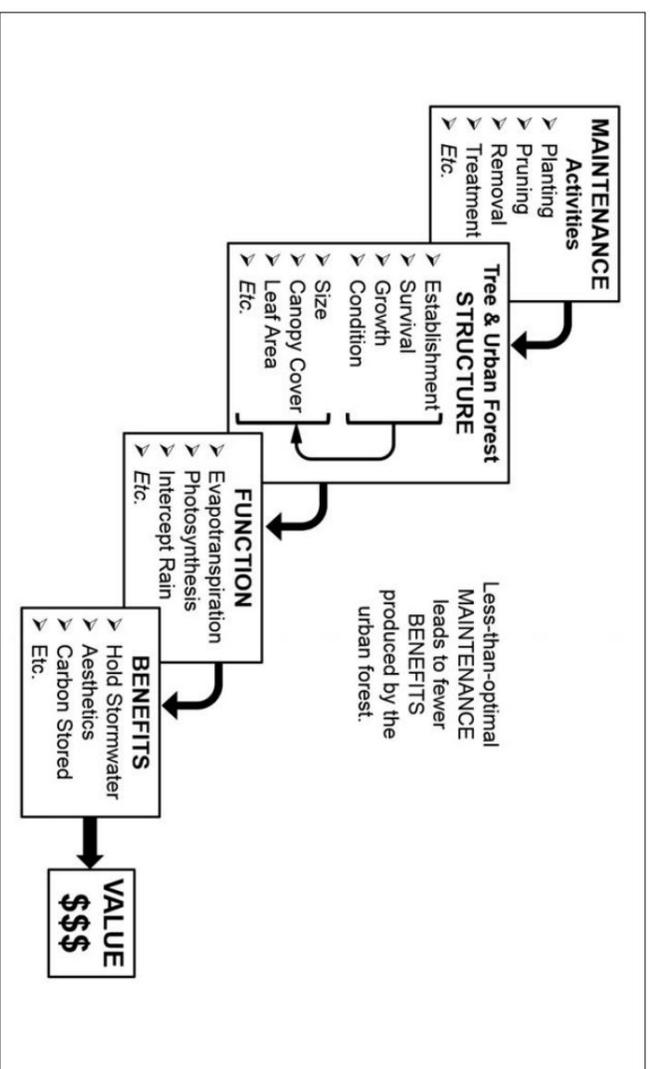


Figure 1. Maintenance directly impacts tree structure, which in turn impacts the functions and benefits provided by the urban forest.

<https://auf.isa-arbor.com/content/isa/41/6/293.full.pdf>