

Borough of Phoenixville

Tree Advisory Meeting

04/06/2026

Attendance: Commissioners - Mary Foote, Susan Di Cerchio, Justin Gordon, Jennifer Chandler, Borough Representatives - Brian Watson, Alexis Strunk; Borough Council Liaison - Brian Weiss; Contract Arborist - vacant

Action items in **BOLD**

Minutes Review

- approved

Public Comment

- Brian and Sharon Mercovich (233 4th Ave) - Questions and concerns about tree removals on 4th Ave. that were not on removal list. Wondering who makes these removals, who approves them, and whether the list is updated. Is there a long term vision? Three tree removal lists exist: 1) general removal via Borough, 2) Callery Pear tree removal (invasive), 3) PECO removals. TAC has no authority on the trees PECO trims/removes. PECO came to Borough to discuss and identify trees that were needed to be removed by PECO. Commissioner Di Cerchio and Mrs. Mercovich asked to have the list made public, and Mr. Watson agreed to provide those data. Complaints about the PECO tree removals would need to be submitted to the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission.
- Chris Andrei (425 Vanderslice St) - Possible new development (Station Hill). Has not been up for discussion at Planning Commission. Would occupy the strip of forested land by Vanderslice. Chris' concern is the steep terrain sloping toward SteelPoint. Some trees in that area are marked with purple tape. If the trees come down, he worries about water runoff. Mentioned 5 very large Borough Sycamore trees labelled 2233, 2236 - 2239. He wants to know the plans for construction if the plan goes through, and especially what will happen to the trees. Here to voice opinion that trees be kept if the plan moves through and is approved. If the plan moves through the Planning Commission, then the landscape project would move through TAC and also the landscape architect.
- Doug Christman (143 4th Ave) - In reference to tree removal list on website - what do blanks under date column mean? Alexis mentioned that in those cases, the contractor has not yet nailed down the date, and the notice can be as little as 4-days. Doug had a question about when the 2027 list will be available for the public. Brian mentioned that the 2027 list will be available by the end of 2026. Doug asked about the significance of the different colors on the website, and Alexis indicated that these were size categories. Doug asked if we can we share name of the Borough's arborist, and Watson indicated

that this list was developed by our prior arborist, but that we do not have an arborist currently. Doug asked about our Tree City USA status, which we currently have. Doug mentioned that PECO cut down trees and left a mess, but the Borough is cleaning up the mess - the agreement between the Borough and the contractor mentioned that the Borough is responsible for grinding and cleaning. Doug filed a complaint with PUC about tree removals. Doug said that PECO has a 4-year trimming cycle that they will adhere to if Boroughs agree to it. Doug spoke with a PECO representative who indicated that a Borough official at Phoenixville indicated that PECO could wholesale remove the tree for aesthetic reasons, and the representative from PECO indicated that they would have stuck to a 4-year trimming cycle. The Borough representative indicated that they made the decision to remove the trees to replace them with more appropriate species. Doug final question - is there a formal mechanism for submitting a request to take trees off the removal list? Gordon indicated that there is no formal, written process. Doug would like to have trees 380, 381, and 382 removed from the tree removal list. We can look for each of these trees in the Arborist's report (2025). Mr. Weiss suggested linking to the Arborist's report in the tree removal list to increase clarity and transparency. Another suggestion was to flip the consulting process with how the Borough interacts with PECO to decide on which trees are removed so that the TAC is involved in those discussions and so there is transparency in the process with the community members

- Ken Schutter (142 Fourth Avenue) - Here as an observer. Disappointed with the idea that someone determines the aesthetics of a tree. Wishes the decision were not on one person's shoulders, and thinks it should be a multi-person decision. Mentioned that there was information circulating that there is an oak tree removal program. Watson confirmed that this exists, but it is a 12-year plan and each of the potential oak trees to be removed are being evaluated each year. When asked why these trees are being removed, Watson indicated that these were mostly large pin oak trees that are reaching the end of their life and some are becoming dangerous. In addition, these trees tend to encroach into pipes, upend sidewalks, etc.
- Mike McGovern (405 West Anderson Ave) - Interested in being involved on the TAC. Asked what work orders for contractors say. He would like to ensure that best practices are used and followed by contractors.
- Kate Sickelsteel (45 North Main - Riverworks Complex) - Here to observe/learn
- Andrea Wren-Hardin (225 First Ave) - Concern about trees being cut all over the Borough. Andrea asked if a moratorium can be put on the tree removal list in the future if no Borough Arborist exists. Andrea confirmed through a conversation with PECO that they will not take a tree down unless a Borough official approves - she wants to remind us that aesthetics are subjective and decisions should not be based on one person's opinion. Andrea mentioned that there are trees on First Ave (0664 and 0666) that need pruning by the Borough. She asks if she is allowed to prune the tree, or if the Borough must prune. Andrea was informed that she can request tree pruning and assessment from the Borough. Last question asked if homeowners were responsible for repairing sidewalks damaged by tree roots, which they are.

Committee Member Updates/Discussions

- n/a

Arborist Update

- n/a

Current Business

- 2026 Tree Removal List
- 2026 Plantings - Volunteer plantings will be planned for Fall
- Budget Report
- Community Outreach

New Business

- 2026 Volunteer Pruning - will be planned for Fall

Bird Town

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm

Next meeting - May 4, 2026 6:00 pm