

Tree Advisory Commission Meeting

Monday, May 4, 2026

Agenda

Committee: Ms. Foote, Ms. Di Cerchio, Mr. Gordon Ms. Chandler, and Ms. Warning

BC Liaison: Mr. Weiss

Staff: Mr. Krack, Mr. Watson, Ms. Strunk and Ms. Getzfread

ACTION ITEMS ARE IN BOLD

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - A. Meeting Minutes - minutes approved
- III. Public Comment #1
 - A. Paul Kusco (225 Virginia Ave) - Two issues: 1) Years ago, the neighbors on Virginia Ave developed a planting plan for replacement trees on their stress. Concerned that two seemingly healthy hybrid princeton elms (1369 and 1370) were removed in May 2026. They would like to know why they were removed, who requested them to be removed (or was it part of Borough plan), and who authorized the removal? 2) Requesting emergency pathology testing and treatment of 7 sugar maple trees planted in 2005. Bark has turned black with white blotches in recent years, and there is concern. Last year one of the trees did not leaf out and fell over before the tree could be removed. This year, all but one remaining *Acer* is showing signs of stress. Requesting that Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories be approached for the pathology testing and recommendation. Tree tab numbers have been provided by Mr. Kusco (1366, 1391, 1390, 1371, 1372, 1385, and 1384
 - B. Joan Beregi (544 Chester Ave) - Pointed out that the information on the website re: Brandywine Urban Forest (BUF) and the arborist himself is out of date. Joan contacted BUF who indicated that he had not worked for the Borough since 2025, but that he had put in a proposal for the most recent RFP. The arborist suggested that community members ask the Borough to develop a Shade Tree Commission (1907 Shade Tree Legislation). Joan says that the arborist indicated that as of 2024, 71% of trees on assessment were in good condition. Joan listed many trees classified as "good" condition have been removed. She wants to know who is making the decision to remove the trees? Joan mentioned several trees specifically, including tree tags 380, 381, and 382. Wants answers to many questions: who is making decisions about tree removal, who sits on the tree appeal board mentioned on the Borough's website? Joan requests answers and transparency, and if they aren't given, will submit complaints to state officials, Arbor Day society, Tree City, etc. Brandywine Urban Forest indicated that they provide the Borough a ten year pruning plan (Borough doesn't have recollection of plan).

- C. Rich McGuigan (1279 Tyler Ave) 2341 - Complained about an oak tree in 2025. A tree contractor came out to inspect, some action was taken, the contractor came on several occasions, but the tree was never actually removed fully because the contractor said PECO would need to cut the power in order for the tree to be removed (electric was not cut and tree not removed). This spring, the contractor indicated he would be back to remove the tree, but issues arose that prevented the tree from being removed. He is concerned about lack of communication among Borough, contractors, and community members. Rich is still waiting for the tree to be removed. Rich has been trying to contact the Borough to no avail. **Watson indicated that PECO would be out on May 12 for the removal.**
- D. Doug Christman (143 4th Ave) - Doug thanked everyone involved in removing trees 380, 381, and 382 from removal list.
- E. David Lutzker (243 Morgan St) - Representing Phoenixville Green Team (President). They are seeking to increase collaborations, including with TAC. They hope to help publicize volunteer opportunities.
- F. Bonnie Elliot (530 Columbia Ave) - Questioned how residents are told that they will have a tree taken down? Watson and Strunk indicated that letters go out to residents once the contract is signed, and door hangers are hung a week before the trees are scheduled to be removed.

IV. Committee Member Updates/Discussions

- A. Humphry Marshal Tree Sapling Giveaway - Occurred on Saturday April 25. Very successful - few trees left that residents need to pick up (about ten). One extra tree left that can be claimed, which is a Chestnut Oak. Fifty trees total.
- B. Arbor Day - Does TAC want to align the Arbor Day celebration with Earth Day in the future? The motion passes to make that alignment. Warning suggests that we expand our social media presence and advertisement.

V. Current Focus Business

- A. 2026 Removal List - Borough agreed to remove 3 trees from the removal list, and we have asked that they halt removal on 22 additional trees for which removal recommendations were not made. The Borough is currently putting out an RFP for assessment. The Borough is currently working on an RFP for a Borough Arborist. Gordon will attend Finance Committee to see if this can be funded. Weiss said committee is working to try to find money to fund assessment and arborist in 2026. **Di Cerchio pointed out that per Jean Krack's 4/27 email to TAC the borough "will complete our contract with Sky High as it relates to the remaining list of removals."** **Watson said he will look into it.** Warning also asked how trees 380, 381, and 382 landed on the removal list, and **Watson said he would look into it.** Chandler requested that the arborist RFP specify that we are seeking an urban arborist (someone trained in urban and suburban ecosystems) be hired as they have the expertise we need.

- B. 2026 Plantings - 80 trees planted by Borough in 2026, the goal is to have 80 more plantings before the end of the year. TAC can help select planting species, but will need to get Strunk the list of species by the end of August for fall orders. Gordon asked that any community members who want a tree planted in front of their house reach out with a request. Weiss pointed out that the planting:removal ratio is about 3:1. Gordon pointed out that for 2026 alone it is closer to 2:1. Volunteer planting in fall for at least 20 sites, but perhaps more, though it is unclear if the trees will be sourced from the PHS or elsewhere. Planting will occur in October or November
- C. 2026 Volunteer Pruning - Strunk put together a list of trees that may need pruning based on planting date. TAC would need to determine which of these trees need pruned. DiCerchio suggests we prune suckers soon, hold off on structural pruning until fall. DiCerchio suggested June for sucker pruning.
- D. Budget Report - no issues, no report
- E. Community Outreach - No Borough review as of yet for the two TAC template emails that Borough might send to community members to acknowledge community members' questions, giving timeline, close loop. Borough and TAC will try to address these by the June meeting.

VI. New Business

Gordon asked how long TAC has to provide comments on development plans being provided. Watson suggested that we should attend Planning Commission meetings to voice our opinions. Watson indicated that the Borough has landscape architects that review all of these plans, too, and submit their comments to the Planning Commission. Foote asked if TAC can discuss our thoughts with the landscape architect, and Watson said he was unsure. Weiss suggests that if community members are concerned about tree removals, they should also attend Planning Commission meetings to advocate. Weiss says that the way we approach the Planning Commission with recommendations we make is important. Gordon indicated that the Arborist used to review these plans for TAC and give recommendations.

- A. Station Hill Subdivision and Land Development
 - 1. DiCerchio asked about the London Plane trees that are slated for removal on this project. Watson said that the landscape architects are currently reviewing the plan.
- B. 101 High Street - Was on Planning Commission agenda in March - unclear where they are in the process.
- C. Township Line Road - Was on Planning Commission agenda in March - unclear where they are in the process. DiCerchio indicated that small section of forest (around 40 acres) seems to be slated for removal - concerned about not knowing the tree inventory, and suggests we should request the inventory.
- D. Dogwood Festival - Dogwood Planting Location - Jaycees asked what planting location would be appropriate for the 5/16 event. Recommendation was to place the tree in the spot where the last dogwood was planted (has since died). Foote suggested that the Jaycees "adopt" the tree and water/care.

VII. Public Comment #2

- A. Chris Andre (425 Vanderslice) - Indicated that previously there was only a sketch of the Station Hill project, and asked if the public could access. DiCerchio indicated that it can be found on the website
- B. Virginia Murphy (222 Church St) - Thanked the Borough for bringing mulch to the street trees on their street. Wanted to point out the heat island effect is increasing over time in the Borough, and pointed out that old, large shade trees provide the ecosystem service of cooling in our Borough. A small street tree was removed near her house that looked healthy, and she wondered why the tree was removed? She does not have a tree tag number, but it was in front of Sanctuary Tattoo on Church Street (205 Church Street).
- C. Rich McGuigan (1279 Tyler Ave) - What is protocol for following up to make sure he gets a tree planted once his larger tree is removed? Strunk says that he does not need to resubmit a tree planting request.
- D. Sharon Pronchik (233 4th Ave) - Asking about the 22 trees still on the 2026 removal list. Disappointed with the response of "we will look into it." It is more urgent and timely. Sharon wants the trees off the list and wants to know a timeline for the discussion.
- E. Andrew Dunn (1105 Lane Ave) - Is it worthwhile to do a soil test for Dogwood planting site since the last planted dogwood tree died? Unfortunately, there is not enough time before the planting for a soil test.
- F. Andrea Wrenhardin (225 1st Ave) - She has emailed TAC and has received no reply in the past. Would love a recognition that email was received. Andrea has a certified arborist evaluate the pin oak in front of her house, and due to pest issues, the tree needs to be pruned and treated for viability. Asked if the Borough work with community members to prune dead limbs on these pin oaks? Foote indicated that there is a protocol for requesting Borough pruning through "manage tree application." Tree number 0666, she believes. She asked that if she pays the money to have the tree treated, can the Borough maintain? Would like a reassessment on the 22 trees that are currently on the removal list. Foote asked if the contract can be put on hold, and Watson said that if the contract is not fulfilled we can get financial penalties. **Watson indicated that they will look into it, but that it might be possible to "swap" a few individuals, but Weiss indicates that if large numbers of trees need to be swapped, we get into more legal ramifications and it may not be possible on a larger scale.** For land developments, he encourages TAC to advocate for the trees to remain on the sites.
- G. Tienfong Ho (1721 Coventry Lane, Schuylkill Township) - Happy that the Borough will be putting out an RFP for an arborist. Pointed out that some of the trees on the interactive map read as healthy, but are on the 2026 removal list. If there is no arborist when these trees are removed, is there a consequence for not having an arborist? Question: after a tree is removed, does a citizen have to request a tree be planted? Gordon says that they do not. Asked who put the approved tree list together - the Borough indicated that Brandywine Urban Forest

put the list together. Indicated that the first few years of a tree's life is the most important stage for pruning, and suggests that folks trained in pruning address the trees in this early life stage.

- H. Ryan Mercovich (233 4th Ave) - Asked if the 2026 removal list included trees that were all approved by an arborist? Watson said that arborist did assessment in 2024 that was put out for bid in 2025 for the 2026 removal list. Asks that TAC keep looking into the reason these trees are on the removal list. Asks that documentation be kept for all removals, including clear and transparent criterion that were met removal. Suggested the same be kept for all tree-related activities (pruning, planting, etc.).
 - I. Emilyn Fox (351 1st Ave) - Pointed out that on the 2026 removal list, there is no reason for removal. DiCerchio seconded the need for those criterion to be clear
 - J. Dana Waldman (238 Hall St) - Seconds the comment that DiCerchio made earlier in the meeting that trees should not be cut down during nesting season, particularly since we are a Bird Town. Whose responsibility is it to advocate that trees not be removed during nesting season? **Watson said they will make it a requirement in the next bid that trees not be removed during nesting season.**
 - K. Tracey Tackett (225 Church St) - Thanked Borough for mulch delivery. Heard concerns about miscommunications and decisions being made about tree removal. She is a land-use planner, and she says that we can ask the Borough staff to have the planners come to TAC before the Planning Commission meetings to hear our opinions and allow for a formal recommendation to the Planning Committee. She also suggests we start conversations about preserving Borough woodlands.
 - L. Paul Kusco (225 Virginia Ave) - Who will respond to him about the plans he presented in part 1 - the Borough will reach back out to him. He seconds Tracey's proposal to preserve woodlands, particularly in proposed development projects.
 - M. Bill Felton (213 Church St) - Asked if we've reached out to DCNR or Penn State Extension for consulting services? Foote indicated that we have been working with PHS.
 - N. David Lutzker(243 Morgan St) - Experience with Planning Commission is that no matter when you give them feedback, it's too late, and the professionals have already made their recommendations. Mentioned that TAC needs to be allowed to be in the process from the beginning. Without trees, we are not a Bird Town.
- VIII. Adjournment - Adjournment at 7:55p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6:00 pm.