

**Shepherdstown Tree Commission draft minutes
Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 6 PM— train station**

Members present: Linus Bicker, Robin McGroarty, Charlotte Baker-Shenk
Absent: James Dillon

Visitor: Jamie Byron

1. Linus called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

2. Approval of October 9, 2025 minutes.

Robin moved to approve the October 9, 2025 minutes. Approved unanimously.

3. Public comments.

Jamie offered helpful comments throughout the meetings until he needed to leave at 7:30 PM.

4. Unfinished business.

a. Review pending tree actions.

Town Hall Sugar Maple --has been removed, but the stump is still there. Jamie noted that grinding doesn't work well anyway, because the machine does not go deep enough; need to ax out the root.

The mayor has requested that we check with Historic Landmarks about the proposed "bed", needing to be consistent with the town character. Tree Commission will

Actions: Tree Commission recommends creating a half-moon knee wall (approximately 2' tall) and an appropriate root barrier. Tree Commission member also discussed the concept of creating a larger wall and planting area on the West side of King Street where there is a difference in elevation between the street and the sidewalk. Linus will develop a packet to present to HLC and proceed with vendor procurement contingent upon HLC approval.

112 W. German (Bistro)

Linus talked with Woody concerning shifting the tree well. Constraints exist related to location of existing hole in concrete well. Tree Commission members discussed enlarging the tree well similar to how was done on East German where the Okami cherry was planted last spring.

Action: Tree Commission will consult with vendor to measure tree space and provide options. Linus and Robin will assess how much space there is on the sidewalk for possible changes.

207 W. German –Viking not yet done the work

207 S. King –Viking not yet done the work

108 E. New (Jim Auxer)

Action: Linus check completion status with Viking

German and Duke

Linus has received \$240 estimate for this work, which includes the lilac on German & Princess.

Action: Charlotte moved to approve this bid. Action approved. Ecological Services to perform work.

309 W. German

Shawn completed the fall treatment last week. Tree Commission will continue to monitor tree

335 W. German --

Action: Linus check completion status with Viking

310-314 W. German

Linus advised Tree Commission that Woody Coe indicated that sewer pipes would interfere with any excavation needed for tree planting. Tree Commission also discussed having assessed the area and that the ground has too much gravel to be optimal for planting without major soil enhancement, which does not sound feasible given the infrastructure located there.

W. High St. overlooking baseball field

Action: Linus will coordinate with the University about any objection for the town to plant approximately 15 small multi-stem trees in the town's right of way to improve the viewscape for the residents on that street. ask the university provost if we can add small trees/shrubs in this area (would require some maintenance). For consideration are: viburnums, ninebarks, multi-stem serviceberry. 8-12' apart and would avoid hydrant and stop sign. Tree Commission also discussed the area on the McMurrin property adjacent to the town run where the sycamore was removed some time ago. Jamie Byron provided insight that he is working with the University as part of his own initiative in an effort to improve that area by adding trees and/or suitable vegetation.

213 W. German

Tree Commission discussed this site as being a complex issue that requires further assessment. With this being a state road, improvements to the tree well will require coordination with the state. Tree Commission opted to keep this as a longer term project recognizing that planting in the spring likely not feasible in this location.

220 W. German

Tree Commission discussed options for tree well in this site. This was a previous site of a tree well that was built into the sidewalk. There was anecdotal information that the owners may be agreeable to having trees planted in their yard as opposed to in the town right of way. Tree commission will continue to discuss options.

337 W. German --Stump not yet ground

299 E. German –Contact pending with owner.

403 E. High

Robin did the review and communicated what he saw to Linus who then asked Erik/Viking to do the end weight reduction. Clearance pruning off the lines and adding two cables.

Mayor Gatz requested the grinding of various stumps in the town right of way. Those removals are being coordinated with Viking.

Mayor Gatz also requested that we consider planting trees on the north side of “Shepherd cemetery”.

b. Approved Species List

Jamie said this would be completed by January.

c. FY2026 Tree Planting

Actions: Charlotte will cut and paste from the September minutes our proposed list of trees. Linus will review and propose any changes, then bring to the commission for review at our December meeting.

d. Grant Funding

Linus reported that the state does have grant funds for this year.

Action: Linus will submit a new application, which will include funds for Arborscope.

The Tree Commission discussed the general concept of having an annual contract for tree services that could include complex pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, monitoring tree health in the town.

Action: Linus will write up options for such a contract for commission review at its December meeting.

f. Jefferson County tree canopy plan

We are currently working on making connections with Shepherd University for adding trees. Charlotte reported on a “plant more trees” request from the organization Save Our Soil (SOS), which led to the creation of a Miyawaki forest at Shepherd Village— a potential model for something similar at SU.

Mayor Gatz also emailed Linus listing areas for planting trees in Shepherdstown, including the courtyard of the Entler hotel, the train station, and the Hurley property on Mill Street.

g. Sage Place tree Wells

Saxon Woodii.

Action: Ordering would be needed by January.

h. Landscaping company (R&L Landscaping) hired by town.

Charlotte brief the Tree Commission that she talked with Gino to find out if R&L Landscaping had access to the criteria the commission had formulated for landscaping work with a key concern being that the tree wells were mulched high on the root collar and trunks of the trees. It was determined that R&L Landscaping did not receive that document and that Gino has since provided it to them.

Action: Linus will secure a copy of the contract made with R&L Landscaping. (Joel Lainez)

Action: The commission agreed to approve the proposal from Ecological Landscaping for root collar excavations— which will include correcting the problem created by R&L, pulling the mulch away from tree trunks.

New Business

Tree #228 reported “dead” on old Queen Alley

Action: Linus will observe to see if it is indeed dead. If so, request removal by Viking.

Tree #357 welcome center crabapple— Gino raised resident concern about problems created by adding decorations. Robin thinks that lightweight decorations are not a problem

Action: Linus will make request that anyone adding decorations needs check with the commission first.

Rocky&High St

Portion of tree fell on house fence. Viking removed the tree.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.