

Shepherdstown Tree Commission Draft Minutes
Saturday, April 10, 2025
Town Hall

Members present: Linus Bicker, James Dillon, Charlotte Baker-Shenk
(Absent: Robin McGrorty)

Visitors: Jim Auxer, Jamie Byron (arrived later)

Linus called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

Approval of March 15 Minutes

James moved to approve the draft Tree Commission minutes of March 15, 2025.
No objections noted. Unanimous approval.

Public Comments: Jim wants to make sure the Commission understands that the Arbor Day celebration is really important for Shepherdstown and asked about Commission plans. It was noted that planting of a bald cypress was already on our agenda. Later, before leaving, Jim affirmed the work of the Commission.

Unfinished Business

Review pending and completed tree actions—Tree Action Log

James noted that the sugar maple #369 at town hall needs root collar excavation. James will check for any presence of bark beetles, then we'll treat if needed. James thinks we can save the tree; recommends 30 gal water 3-4 times over the summer.

Linus will order gator bags for this sugar maple and the other newly planted trees.

#73 red bud near JSB – Viking is removing it. We agreed to replace with fringe tree closer to driveway entrance. Plan also plant another fringe tree on other side of entrance.

#202 S.Church –will plant fringe tree, which is on the tree planting list.

New Street (no tag) Elise & Marty Baach– pruning work is done.

Tree well at Entler: Linus will review bid for brick work from Ecological Solutions. (~\$880)

The additional new pruning work on Mill & High St (#1061, 1062) has not yet been done.
Viking proposal was approved.

Vendor work timeline: Jamie confirmed that the new trees will be planted starting the week of April 12th. He has also been completing the basic pruning on German Streete.

Viking finished the complex pruning work this past week, including the Cullison Park hazard trees and Amerikaner maple tree. James notices that maples on West German seem to be in decline. Arborists will continue to monitor. Discussion occurred that could be soil issue and/or the fact that sugar maples are not well suited for urban environments. Red maples also have ph preferences that are less conducive to those locations and can lead to chlorosis.

105 and 108 W Washington – Linus has Viking's proposal for pruning where rubbing against structure or need electric lines clearance. Not yet done.

102 N. Duke –Jamie assessed and reported that these trees are healthy.

Update on New Tree purchases

Jamie reported that he was able to get a hophornbeam from Sunny Meadow. He noted that American hornbeam is more picky but beautiful. Hophornbeams are more resilient and tolerant. The Tree Commission decided to plant two of those species on East German in front of the Good Shop. Will put the American hornbeam across from the Yellow Brick Bank building. The Tree Commission decided to add a second fringe tree at JBS road entrance on either side of the bank entrance to create a balanced aesthetic.

Linus needs to hear back from Jamie about tree availability from Sunny Meadows before asking Viking to take out the Good Shop trees. But Viking can do the removal at Tony's now.

Treatment of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Commission approved Shawn Walked proposal for EAB treatment of ash trees in Cullison Park. Charlotte will contact Shawn.

Arbor Day Event

Linus noted that the Forest Service usually gives the town a new tree each year for May Day. Linus has been coordinating with WV Forestry to attend and is waiting on an update. The Bald Cypress given by the Forestry Service last year is in the care of James Dillon and will be planted as well. Discussion occurred to have a planting event on Apr 26th at Riverfront Park.

Mulch and Clean Up in Tree Boxes

Lori Robertson expressed concerns about the aesthetic condition of the street tree wells and associated flower beds in town. She recommended hiring Brandon Hayden from GreenIsGreat 304-620-0956 for this work since there have been historic problems with town staff doing it. James has worked with Brandon on Sage Place and affirmed his skills. James agreed to meet with him (about cutting back the liriopse and mulching appropriately). Charlotte agreed to email the mayor and town staff making this recommendation while also clarifying that although the Commission does not see box maintenance as part of Commission work, it does impact soil and tree health. So proper maintenance does affect the success of our work. Long range, we hope to use more ground covers to reduce need for mulch.

Approved Species List

James and Jamie working on it. Will have ready in July.

Arborscope Database

Jamie will add in all of the pruning work he's done to the database and see if Robin is willing to add the work that Viking has completed. **James** volunteered to do this updating regularly during our meetings in the future. Tree Commission discussed renewing Arborscope license on July 2

Long-range Strategy: Brief discussion occurred for long-term tree canopy management plan: planting and removal. There was a general desire for more color on German St and an idea presented to create a "watch list" of trees that may be in decline so can act proactively.

Soil in Tree Wells

Observation that some wells are very small (have grates); most are medium-sized wells, some larger. Consensus that that it would work better to plant **ground covers** instead of needing so much mulch. Possible ground covers: sweet woodruff, green creeping Jenny (not the yellow one) that allows other plants to get through; Robin's plantain, pussy toes, Pennsylvania sedge, violets, wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*). **Jamie & James** will work on a list of possible ground covers. **Charlotte** will pot up some of what is used at Shepherd Village to experiment with and see what works well in town. We agreed that "soil health" should be on agenda for next meeting.

New Business

102 N Duke St—observation of redbud indicates it's in good health, so no action needed.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.