

Shepherdstown Tree Commission Draft Minutes
Thursday, May 6, 2025 @6pm – Town Hall

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

Visitors: Jim Auxer, Jamie Byron

Linus called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Approval of April 10, 2025 Minutes

Linus reviewed the contents of the minutes for everyone. Charlotte moved to approve the draft tree commission minutes of April 10, 2025. No objections noted.

Public Comments:

Jim Auxer said it would be helpful to have photos on our website of the tree cover of Shepherdstown taken from a high advantage point (like that available from someone doing pruning, or perhaps a drone). Jim also recommended Hallie Taylor as a resource for learning the history of the old crabapple tree at the old library.

Jamie announced that he has completed pruning 95% of trees and will be finishing in the coming weeks. He noted that all of the new trees have been planted and will need pruning attention for the next several years. The Commission commended him for his excellent work.

Unfinished Business

Review pending and completed tree actions— Tree Action Log

Robin observed that Bartlett has not yet pruned the old crabapple tree despite an April 9 note from Derek saying this would take place within a week. Still can't see the "eye" on the old Library. We previously communicated to Bartlett tree service our desire that the tree be pruned the way it is always been pruned. Robin will contact Derek again.

Jamie reported the sugar maple outside Town Hall is showing more die back. Robin and James will continue to monitor and assess health for potential removal and replacement in fall. Linus has purchased 12 gator bags for the new town trees and will assess for use on this tree.

Tree Commission will consider another new tree for the area across from yellow brick bank/El Ranchero.

Jamie was able to purchase and plant 2 fringe trees (for same cost as 1 larger fringe tree) to replace the redbud near entrance to JSB.

Cullison Park: Viking completed pruning and downing of hazard trees. Trees 101 will provide EAB treatment for the ash trees in May.

Trees #90 and 124 at Bankhurst home - Viking scheduled to complete this work.

High and Mill St 2 hazard maple trees (1 is dead and needs to be downed; the other can be pruned back to see if it can be revived) — Viking has given a reasonable bid. Will proceed with this.

Arbor Day tree planting

Linus reported that the forest service gave the town a banner to celebrate the 19th year as a Tree City USA. The banner was displayed at May Day while Mayor Gatz offered remarks as to the importance and benefits of the town's tree canopy.

Robin and Jamie will plant the black Willow from James on Saturday, May 17 (10-11:30am) at Riverfront Park. Linus will check with Woody Coe about tree previously donated.

Standard of Care decision on purchase

The commission decided it was not necessary to make this purchase. Instead, every request for vendor bid will include the statement "We expect compliance with ANSI A300" (a best practices statement).

Approved species list (James, and Jamie)

Will be completed in July.

Arborscope:

The commission decided to renew the Arborscope license.

Arborscope Database:

Jamie agreed to add in pruning work information for each tree he has worked on

Robin will ask Erik (Viking) for that information on all complex pruning and removals they have done and then will revise the database to include that information.

(James previously offered to revise the database with whatever information is offered at each meeting of the commission.)

We briefly discussed the possibility of changing the database numbering system since it is so chaotic at present. This would be a huge task which could be a barrier to implementation.

Soil management care

Ground covers: Charlotte brought and gave to Jamie 3 trays of 4 different native ground covers to plant with the new trees, experimenting to see which does best.

Mayor Gatz sent an email received during the commission meeting, requesting recommendations for landscaping work for town tree beds, including best practices for mulching and any other instructions to give to potential vendors.

The commission brainstormed a suggested set of expectations and a list of potential vendors in response. The commission is recommending that this landscaping work be accomplished by known landscapers rather than done by people who also do snow removal.

New Tree Watering

Linus reported difficulties in using the water storage tank because of difficulty in parking close enough to the trees and having gravity flow through the hose for water to reach the trees. The spigot in the War Memorial could be utilized during dry spells. Linus, Robin, and Jaime will monitor and assess trees for watering needs and volunteer as needed.

FY2026 Tree Planting

We will start considering locations that need more trees, looking at Rumsey Park and also side streets.

New Business

Jack and Amy Childers at 105 E. New Street reported a dead tagged tree. It's a hybrid 'Crimson King' maple — which Jamie noted has been dying in other locations as well.

Jamie had a conversation with the Childers about their intentions. Instead of replanting with a tree, they wish to remove all the grass and create a native plant bed. They have already planted nearby a row of native hollies. The commission agreed to take down the dead tree with stump grinding.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8 PM.