

Shepherdstown Tree Commission Draft Minutes
Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 6 PM – Town Hall

Members present: Linus Bicker, Robin McGrorty, Charlotte Baker-Shenk, James Dillon (for first part of meeting)

Visitors: Jim Auxer, Jamie Byron

Approval of June 12, 2025 minutes

Robin moved to approve the draft tree commission minutes of June 12, 2025

No objections noted.

Public Comments

Jim Auxer requested that the tree touching his house be trimmed (108 New St.)

Jamie observed that the hawthorn tree in front of Bistro 112 is possibly dead, has not leafed out; needs to be assessed.

Unfinished Business

Tree #137: Shawn Walker assessed this tree (was hit by car) and found no evidence of borers. No action needed.

Hazard trees at High & Mill: work is scheduled with Viking

Sage Place tree wells --mulch:

Woody Coe told Charlotte that he prefers purchasing a whole pallet from Sunny Meadows (60 bags per pallet). Public Works can deliver 3 to 4 bags at each tree (8 tree wells x 4 = 24 bags needed), and then save the rest for later.

Action: Linus will send in the request to Woody for oak bark mulch.

Charlotte reported that there will be some weeding needed before the mulch is added to the tree wells. She talked with Terry Hadley who volunteered to do the needed weeding (and expressed concern about having Public Works staff do that because of what she had seen in the past).

Sage Place tree wells -- ground cover

A year ago, James had a recommended purchase of Carex woodii, but has been unable to source the plants for purchase. It seems the plugs may now be available for fall purchase and planting.

Action: James will send around the budget information and vendor information. Jamie will plan to make the purchase (after registering with that vendor) and then apply for reimbursement from the town.

Linus reported that bids for landscaping team are due in next week. If this process works well, then the newly hired landscaping team could do the planting. Otherwise, we (Robin, Charlotte, Jamie) will organize and train volunteers to do the planting.

Jamie also expressed a willingness to train Public Works staff about how to do weeding if there is a problem with finding a new competent landscaping team for the town.

306 W. German- Pruning was completed by Ecological Services.

211 W. New St— trimming request. Both Robin and Linus checked the tree and did not observe it to be touching the home.

Sidewalk clearance/pruning on King Street and Welcome Center— Ecological Services completed all that pruning up to Washington Street. Cleaned up the underside and removed dead branches.

Note: Jamie observed that the crabapple tree in front of the welcome center has good structure up to about 7' and then goes into chaos.

Action: after lengthy discussion, the commission decided to commit to long-term slow rehabilitation of the crabapple tree by pruning out (perhaps twice a year) no more than 10% per year to slowly return the tree to a healthy structure. We recognize this tree is very important to the community; the process will take multiple years.

410-412 E. German— The trees in this location are not on town property and reportedly belong to the HOA. There was also discussion about the need for a sidewalk along German Street to Sage Place in front of the area where these trees are located. Such action is not within the scope of this commission.

Action: Linus will talk with Liz McGowen.

307 W. German— Shawn assessed the Norway maple tree and observed it to be in poor condition with a large cavity 7' up and decay across most of the trunk. Tree will need to be considered for removal and will continue to be monitored.

Action: Linus will check with Viking about pruning it back more so it doesn't threaten the roof. We will reassess the tree during the next 6-12 months.

309 W. German – Shawn also recommended that the red oak be inspected in late August/early September for signs of bacterial leaf scorch. He observed it needs to be pruned in mid summer or during the dormant season to remove dying back limbs in the crown, etc.

210 W. German— Linus received a good bid from Viking, but still needs to talk with the owner.

Action: Linus will talk with the owner

207 S.King— Heidi Glenn had expressed concerns about pruning needs. Bid received from Viking. Work is scheduled.

103 E. New— Bid received from Viking. Work is scheduled for completion.

Observations about new trees planted

Some concerns about the hornbeams in front of the Good Shop. Jamie noted that one clearly needs staking because it's leaning. The other may be experiencing nutrient deficiency affecting older leaves; new leaves seem to be OK. Will wait and see.

Action: Jamie will stake the leaning horn beam. Charlotte will dig up more violets for fall planting which may help cool the soil around the hornbeam.

Action: Linus will request a bid from Viking for stump removal near the baseball field in anticipation of being able to plant a new tree there.

State forestry grant funding

Linus reported that grant funding through the state is again available. Linus proposed that we consider using these funds for tree maintenance. The grant requires a 50-50 match.

Action: Linus will rewrite the grant proposal and coordinate with the state to identify the grant period.

Locations for FY26 new tree plantings.

We agreed to prioritize plantings in historic neighborhoods on the east and west side of town.

Other suggested areas for new tree planting:

To replace the Town Hall sugar maple,
To replace the hawthorn in front of Bistro 112
216 West German
213 W.German

Action: Robin will talk with Jamie to create a proposed list of tree species for FY 26 purchase and planting this fall.

Letter of Appreciation

We will frame and present a letter to Cool Green owner Sam McMahon to express our appreciation for his willingness to save the very large fir tree in the area he was having cleared to increase space for parking.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:59pm.