

West Reading Shade Tree Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 2, 2026, 6pm

Attendance: V. Graff (Councilperson), K. Grassley (Public Works Director), J. Witmer

Absent: L. Burns, M. Hayes, Z. Shaver

1. Call to Order: 6:01pm
2. Public Comment: none
3. Approval of Minutes: motion by J. Witmer, second by K. Grassley; approved minutes from the May 2025 meeting
4. Old Business
  - a. Tree Watchlist:
    - i. All of the trees on the watchlist from May 2025, have been taken care of.
    - ii. There is a dead tree on the 100 block of 3rd Ave. A letter has been sent to homeowners regarding its removal with no response. Next step is to send a certified letter.
  - b. Tree Inventory
    - i. Does this include the spots in the planting strips where trees have been removed and need to be replaced? Not sure, Jean will walk the borough and make a note of bare spots to review against inventory.
    - ii. Tree inventory in the borough is halfway completed. Arborists created an interactive map to track trees. Waiting to see if the Playground Drive project is going to happen this year, as that will impact the tree inventory.
  - c. Tree Planting
    - i. Tree planting will begin in April.
  - d. Tree Trimming
    - i. Waiting on Playground Drive Project
  - e. Tree Removals
5. New Business
  - a. Shade Tree Letter to Oak Terrace Residents
    - i. The committee reviewed the letter and shared comments. J. Witmer will update, adding more justifications for planting trees and adding that there is no cost. K. Grassley will reach out to Bartlett for information to support tree planting.
    - ii. The committee recommends sending the letter to residents of Oak Terrace where trees have been removed.
6. Adjournment: There being no further business, J. Witmer moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm, with a second from K. Grassley.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Graff, Councilperson

*Months ago, the Committee discussed removing trees on Oak Terrace, where there is no planting strip, and the original oaks were planted on residential properties. Several trees have had to be removed, and some replaced. As trees on this block grow on private property, we can't force replacement. Jean had asked at that time if we might send a letter to the homeowners where trees have not been replaced, and encourage their participation. First draft of that letter was considered at the 3/2/26 Shade Tree Commission's meeting, where Jean was asked to include more benefits of trees in general, and a no-cost statement. We agreed we would give this letter to residents when any borough tree is removed in the future.*

To our neighbor at \_\_\_\_\_:

When many of our West Reading homes were built in the 1920's, the community plans didn't stop with the homes. The founders created a legacy of communal beauty when they planted the trees that have graced our streets for generations to come.

Those trees are vital to our community's health. Other than lending their beauty throughout the seasons, did you know trees:

- Remove large quantities of pollution from the air.
- Reduce global warming by removing carbon dioxide from the air and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere.
- Save us in cooling and heating costs by shading in summer, and acting as wind-breaks in the winter.
- Reduce threat of flooding by directing rainwater into the soil = less storm water run-off.
- Increase the appeal and value of our homes and places of business when mature trees are present.

The Shade Tree Commission of West Reading is entrusted with maintaining our tree inventory. We partner with Bartlett Tree Experts, who among other things, advise us on the type of trees suitable to replace those we have lost to age or disease.

It's always sad to lose one of our 100+ year old trees, but that did occur at your property within the past year or so. The prevailing thought now is to plant different types of trees along our streets, so damage due to disease or insect infestation doesn't destroy all same-species trees at once. The Arborist has recommended the following options as a replacement:

1. (Common name and basic description: height, canopy, fall leaf color, what it drops)
- 2.
- 3.

The Borough will replace the tree at no cost to you. If you would like to choose, please mark your selection above, and return this letter to the Shade Tree Commission in the enclosed self addressed, stamped envelope before

\_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for taking part in keeping West Reading green and healthy for future generations,