



Verona Shade Tree Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes:
date: December 8, 2025
at 5 p.m. in person and Internet Conferencing

Members Present - Quorum Established Yes _____ No _____
Carol Thomas (Chair) <u>x</u>
Bob Prout (member) <u>x</u>
Ira Jacobs (member) <u>x</u>
Val Ryan (member) <u>x</u>
Diane Conboy (member) _____
Catherine Tamasik (alternate #1) <u>x</u>
Kathy Rutherford (alternate #2) <u>x</u> (arriving at 5:55 pm)
Councilwoman Christine McGrath (Council Representative) <u>x</u>

	Discussion	Action Required
1.	Call to order at <u>5:05 pm</u> a) Open Public Meetings Act Statement <u>x</u> b) Roll Call performed. <u>x</u>	
2.	Public Comment Period: No public comment	
3.	Correspondence:	
4	Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of MOTION to Approve: Val Ryan Second: Ira Jacobs APPROVAL: All Members Present <u>x</u> Abstentions: none	Ms. Thomas will email approved minutes to Township Clerk J. Kiernan.
5	<u>Budget</u> :	

6	<p><u>New and Unfinished Business:</u></p> <p><u>Linden Avenue.</u> Mr. Jacobs, a member of the Linden Avenue project subcommittee, reported that he and Ms. Thomas attended a meeting with the Boswell engineers, the Verona PD and FD and learned that the project will begin in February. There will be a residents' meeting in January via Zoom. Boswell will photograph the street, trees, etc. before beginning work. Boswell will have to remove some low tree limbs to avoid them being struck by the paving machinery. Boswell plans to remove 9 to 12 trees. When sidewalk slabs damaged or lifted by tree roots are removed the Township's arborist (Wolowicz) will determine whether root-pruning is feasible to save the tree in question. Ms. Thomas advised the attendees about alternative sidewalk materials, but did not receive positive feedback about the alternatives. Ms. Thomas noted that the Linden Project will proceed in sections.</p> <p><u>Streetscape Project.</u> The Commission invited Jim Lau of Strans Engineering and the Town Manager to attend this meeting to discuss the project. Mr. Lau reported that Strans does not yet have a conceptual design for the project. He stated that the plan calls for 125 new trees for all three phases of the project. The number of trees is constrained by the project budget. He stated that they may remove some of the Callery Pears and replace them with native oaks where there are no electrical wires overhead. Ms. Thomas interjected that we want to see a variety of trees in the plan, and that we cannot allow more Maples. Mr. Lau is happy to work with the Commission on tree selections.</p> <p>Mr. Lau talked about tree pits along the sidewalks, and advised ours are too small; required size is 5' x 10'. There was discussion of the tree pits taking up too much sidewalk space and whether they would interfere with pedestrian traffic. Mr. Lau advised that all the pits do not need to be the same--some larger, some smaller depending on the sidewalk width. They will be designed to capture stormwater and covers will be flush. Mr. Prout mentioned that some property owners would allow trees to be planted on their property instead of in the sidewalk. Mr. Lau also stated that Strans plans to utilize rain gardens and shrubbery in the plan. Overall, they want to increase pervious surfaces by 30 percent.</p> <p>Discussion turned to the Holiday Tree and the green area between Civic Center and Chase Bank. Mr. Lau advised that the Manager asked Strans to include the CC in its plan. Ms. Thomas asked if Strans could draft a plan to make the green area a viable park, and Mr. Lau agreed, but needs authorization from the Manager. This is not in the project budget. With regard to the Holiday Tree, Mr. Lau stated that it should be set back from Bloomfield Avenue because it interferes with the viewscape of the CC. He believes a proper Holiday Tree can be planted in the "new" park (which he refers to as Monument Park), but this would require removal of several trees there.</p> <p><u>Housekeeping Issues.</u> The Commission decided that for 2026 it will continue to meet on the second Monday of the month at 5 pm.</p>	
7	<p>Motion to Adjourn: Ms. Tamasik Second: Ms. Rutherford Adjournment: 6:30 pm Next Meeting: January 12, 2026</p>	