

**Dunellen Shade Tree Commission – January 14, 2026 Meeting Agenda/Minutes**

**CELEBRATING OUR 24th YEAR**

**Attendees:**, Ken., Sue, Bri, Robert, Joe, Jim, Blakesley

**Absent:** Pat, Bill

<b>Members</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Term</b>	
Kenneth Baudendistel	Chairman	01/01/2026 - 12/31/2028	
Sue Butterworth	Commission Member	01/01/2024- 12/31/2027	
Brianna Savage	Commission Member	01/01/2026 - 12/31/2026	<i>(filling John F)</i>
Robert Rios	Commission Member	01/01/2024- 12/31/2028	
Joe Cummins	Vice Chairman	01/01/2026 - 12/31/2027	
Pat Fowler	Commission Member	01/01/2023- 12/31/2025	<i>Needs to complete form</i>
Jim Sweeney	Secretary	01/01/2026- 12/31/2028	
Blakesley Burkhart	non-voting member	01/01/2026 - 12/31/2026	<i>(filling Bri)</i>
Bill Scott	Council Liaison		

**1. Welcome Blakesley**

**2. Vote on positions**

- Positions on the committee were voted on and accepted as followed
- Chairman K.B. Vice Chair J.C. Secretary J.S.

**3. 2026 proposed meeting dates –**

- January 14th – reorganization mtg
- March – 11th
- April- 8th
- June – 10th
- September – 9th
- October – 14<sup>th</sup>

Meeting dates for the year were sent out in an earlier e-mail by Ken. they will fall on the second Wednesday of the dates stated

*All meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday starting at 7pm held in the Senior Center*

**4. Tree City USA application**

- This is the 23rd year of Dunellen being designated as a Tree City town. Ken will submit the annual application

**5. Annual Forestry Plan due Feb 14<sup>th</sup>**

- Forestry plan is due on 2/14.

**6. Forestry Plan –** in our last year need to create a new plan. Dunellen has until December 31st, 2027, for a new plan to approved without losing accreditation.

**7. What's new for 2026 – ideas**

- Label tree identity in Washington Park – using QR Code on plaque adhered to tree
  - Action Bri to look into creating QR Code and Sue to get tree information source
- Schedule time to attend Senior Citizen club who meet each Friay at 10:30 in Sr Ctr
- Discussion ensued on a new project for this year of beginning to label the trees at Washington Park in order to promote the idea of residents connecting more with trees.
- The idea of pursuing more "helpers" from the community was discussed. These individuals would not be on the committee but would be solicited to give us a few hours of their time when we go into the community to trim the whippets at the base of town trees. Use process similar to the brook clean up each year – a waiver will need to be signed in case of injury if used for pruning low branches
- J.C. noted that some of the brick trim around some of the new trees planted need to be secured. Also noted was the need to trim some low-lying branches of our trees. We will pick a date when the weather gets warmer to do this

- B.B. suggested we use the new satellite Museum on the corner of North and Washington to do some educational training
  - director of the new Science and Arts museum. Erika Schaefer  
<eschaefer@monmouthmuseum.org>

**8. Inventory** – it was suggested that we use the Leaf ID app in the future to identify trees

- only area left to complete is Gavornik Park. A future date will be set to do this.... S.B. brought up the fact we need to find out which trees have been taken down so that our inventory stays accurate

We hope to invite the town liaison to one of our meetings soon

1. **Arbor Day Plaques-** Ken is asking for a little assistance to reinstall these when ground defrosts in the spring.
9. **HS Poem Contest- Jim** – .S. is meeting with school principal to initiate the contest with the students. Winner's entry will be published in the Dunellen Reporter, receive a gift certificate from a local Vendor and have tree planted with plaque

*Next Meeting March 11<sup>th</sup> Senior Center*