Shepherdstown WEST VIRGINIA

TOWN HALL
104 N. King Street
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
304-876-2312

Shepherdstown Tree Commission Agenda
Thursday, November 12, 2026 @ 6:00 pm
Town Hall
104 N. King Street

Join online by Zoom:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86067120451?pwd=fWNLscmYpiOmof8PknIig4oZKNXa8i.1
Meeting ID: 860 6712 0451
Passcode: 818383

Or join by telephone:
Dial: (301) 715-8592

1. **Call to Order and Welcome to New Members**
2. **Approval of September 16, 2026 Minutes**
3. **Public Comments**
4. **Overview of Commission Scope and Practices, Administrative Procedures**
5. **Unfinished Business**
    a) Follow through on any public comments or resident requests
    b) Review pending and completed tree actions
    c) 2026 Tree Planting –trees available; vendor proposal; possible locations
    d) Arborscope Tree Inventory
6. **New Business**
    a) Policy for Planting Native v. Non-Native Trees (see list)
    b) Policy for Planting Trees on Resident Property to Increase Town Canopy
    c) Tree Watering Options
    d) Proposal for Part-Time Town Arborist
7. **Adjourn**

SHEPHERDSTOWN TREE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2026 @ 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall – 104 North King Street

1. **Call to Order:** Robin McGrorty called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Attendance

a. **Present Members:** Robin McGrorty (R McGrorty), Chair, Charlotte Baker-Shenk (C Baker-Shenk), Terry Hadley (T Hadley)
b. **Absent Members:** Edith Thompson (E Thompson) and Jim Auxer (J Auxer)
c. **Present Staff:** Beverly Bennett (B Bennett), Staff Support, Hunter Wetzel, AV Support
d. **Visitors**: Jamie Byron (J Byron) and Steve Kershner, Resident

2. **Approval of Minutes**

a. July 9 Minutes: Revised draft
Action: R McGrorty motioned to approve the revised draft of July 9th minutes. T Hadley second. Unanimous approval.
August 13 Minutes
T Hadley offered an amendment to delete mention of volunteering of T Hadley and E Thompson under section "town park invasives". Robin moved to approve the minutes with this amendment. T Hadley second. Unanimous approval.

3. **Public Comments**

The Commission agreed to change the order of the agenda so that visitor Steve Kershner would not need to stay so long. Mr. Steve Kershner was present to discuss the oak tree branches against the top level of his house at 219 W. German Street that is currently being painted. He said Viking had been out to take pictures, and he wanted to know if his house was on the list for the Town to prune branches.

4. **Unfinished Business**

a. **Review pending and completed tree actions – Tree Action Log (See spreadsheet)**:

- Formal vote for removal/stump grinding of Jim Schmidt's tree $1,550
The Commission previously approved Jim Schmidt's request for removal and grinding of tree at his home on W. German Street due to problems with electrical wiring; however, a formal vote is needed. The Viking proposal to accomplish this work is $1,550.
Action: R McGrorty made a motion to approve removal/stump grinding of Jim Schmidt's tree at a cost of $1,550. T Hadley seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

- Review Viking bids
The Commission approved two bid proposals from Viking for pruning and street clearance, etc., on E German Street (1429980 – 31 trees for $8,000) and W German Street (1429979 – 16 trees for $4,000). R McGrorty did the math to help Commissioners see the average cost per tree for such work.

Action: R McGrorty made a motion to approve the bids for clearance and pruning of 31 trees on E German Street at a cost of $8,000. T Hadley seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.
Action: R McGrorty made a motion to approve the bid from Viking for clearance and pruning of 16 trees on W German Street at a cost of $4,000. C Baker-Shenk seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

The Commission further discussed potential problems with re-doing the tree boxes where there are two failing trees on the north side of East German. Viking has already been contracted to remove the westernmost cherry. Too difficult to grind after tree removal? Need to re-plant in those sites.
Follow-Up: R McGrorty said communication with Theresa Swift is needed regarding the approval to remove the one dead cherry tree and grind the stump at 213 East German Street.

- Town Hall sugar maple stump excavation: C Coe, Public Works, said he would look at it concerning use of the excavator. He has concerns about potential cracking of the sidewalk. (C Baker-Shenk talked with him again the next day, and he again felt it would be best to hire out for stump grinding.)

- Eleven new tree wells: C Baker-Shenk, J Byron and Public Works will look at locations for new tree wells. C Baker-Shenk relayed to Commissioners plans to walk downtown with C Coe, K Shipley and J Byron to discuss potential tree planting sites, noting any concerns with utilities, etc.

- Root collar excavations: J Byron will check to see if any further root collar excavations are needed after Native Havens completes their work.

b. **2026 Fall Planting**: Trees currently waiting to be planted: elm, honey locust, Yoshino cherry, smoke tree (Commission needs to reimburse J Byron for this tree), and the two trees being held at Public Works. Commissioners agreed it is best to get those six trees into the ground this fall and then use our credit with Sunny Meadows for spring planting. Orders for those trees would need to be in by the beginning of February.

J Byron reported that his life has become very full. He prefers that, starting next year, he will become just a pro-bono consulting arborist on the Tree Commission, as he needs to take on other paid work for his business. He is happy to do field diagnostics and attend meetings as often as he can. C Baker-Shenk thanked J Byron for his work for the Town and expressed gratitude for his willingness to continue consulting with the Tree Commission. It was noted that Viking typically does not plant trees. Other possible vendors are Scott Schmied (J Byron has worked with and recommends him), Native Havens, and Brian Marsh (Bright Side Landscaping).
Action: C Baker-Shenk will call Scott Schmied about possibly becoming a vendor for town work.

DRAFT

c. **Arborscope Tree Inventory: Access**
R McGrorty reported there are continuing efforts to gain access to this inventory and needed change from Linus's password and email. Commissioners recognize the need to have a permanent stable account that would not change with changing leadership of the Commission. The Commission is still asking about proprietary control and the Commission's ability to work with another vendor to update the inventory.
Follow-Up: R McGrorty

d. **Policy for Planting of Natives and Policy for Non-Native Invasive Species Management:** Commissioners decided to move this question about policy for native and non-native invasive species management to the next meeting. This item was deferred and will be on the October agenda.
Follow-up: Agenda item for October.

e. **Concerning Policy for Homeowners vs the Town on tree care specifications:** Commissioners noted that a lot of this is already in the ordinance and agreed to leave this question for now since it's not clear how/why that got on the agenda.

f. **Administrative Procedures: Handbook/Spending threshold:** Commissioners agreed on the need for clearly stated available information for Commission leaders and new members. Questions like: When does the agenda need to be completed? Chain of Command? What needs to be voted on? Better understanding of the Open Meetings Act? Useful emails for various needs? When is a bid approved by the Commission? What's the next step? Who does the vendor send the invoice to, so they get paid? Can town staff take on this responsibility?
Action: C Baker-Shenk will talk with Mayor Gatz about these questions.

5. New Business

a. **Sugarmaple Cabling Request from Resident on Back Alley:**
Viking bid proposal for $3,100 was approved unanimously. This includes weight reduction pruning, installation of a support cable system, and efforts to extend the life of the mature tree despite existing structural concerns.
Action: R McGrorty made a motion to approve the bid for the W. Back Alley sugar maple from Viking at a cost of $3,100. T. Hadley second. Unanimous approval.

b. **203 W. New Street –** Tree needs trimmed facing Methodist Church (Wilson):
C Baker-Shenk conveyed expressed urgency from C Coe, Public Works, that we act on this trimming request.
Action: R. McGrorty made a motion to approve the bid for tree trimming and branch removal due to branches being tangled with electrical wires. T Hadley seconded the motion. Unanimous approval to request and move on Viking bid.

c. **102 N. Duke Street – Low branches (Fulton):** A request from the resident to remove lower branch so movers' trucks will not hit it. J Byron noted that he had pruned this tree earlier this year (redbud) and that most trucks are only 10' tall. (Some

roads require 13' clearance; state highways require 16'.) Commissioners questioned whether the whole branch really needs to be cut off and wondered if simply taking on some of the weight from the end of it would result in the limb bouncing back up.
Action: J Byron will do pruning of leaning end and observe results.

d. **219 W. German Street –** Branches on house (Kershner): Resident Kershner noted he has a vigorous northern pin oak in front of their home on Duke and W. German. They are planning to paint the house and need to prune limbs that are touching the house.
Action: R McGrorty moved to permit the painter to do the necessary pruning. Viking's maintenance proposal (1429980) already includes this tree and can take care of further work needed. Unanimous approval.

e. **New policy for planting trees on resident property to increase Town canopy:**
R McGrorty said the mayor informally spoke in favor of this. How do we move forward? Apply for grant funding? Does the town purchase, plant, and then the homeowner becomes responsible for maintenance? Will the owner be told they can't remove the tree without permission? Better to select front yard locations for visual impact? Will the University be a special category? If they don't have maintenance funds, can they still be responsible for watering?
Action: C Baker-Shenk will check with Gino/Amy to see if there have been responses to the newsletter request to residents about possible planting sites.

6. **Change in Commission Leadership**
R McGrorty is stepping down as Chair of the Commission and from the Commission itself due to conflicting responsibilities. But he hopes to be able to return to Commission work (as a consultant) in the new year. C Baker-Shenk thanked R McGrorty for his service on the Tree Commission. Members expressed appreciation for the outgoing Chair's work and expertise and hoped for a future return to the Commission.
Action: R McGrorty moved to approve naming two "co-chairs" for the Commission: C Baker-Shenk and T Hadley. The ordinance shows that we as a Commission have flexibility to make such a change. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the Commission.

7. **Adjournment**
   a. R McGrorty moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

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ESTIMATE

Ecological Services LLC
(WV LLC, EIN:33-2254482)
PO Box 568
Shepherdstown, West Virginia 25443
United States

7036088178

BILL TO
Shepherdstown
Amy Boyd

aboyd@shepherdstown.gov

Estimate Number:	115
Estimate Date:	November 3, 2026
Valid Until:	February 19, 2027
Grand Total (USD):	**$1,672.00**

Items	Quantity	Price	Amount
Landscaping Labor for proper planting of 6 street trees — American Smoketree, Jefferson Elm, Okame Cherry, Honey Locust, Black Gum, Black Cherry	6	$240.00	$1,440.00
Expenses 6 bags leaf gro, 9 bags shredded aged hardwood mulch	1	$112.00	$112.00
Expenses American Smoketree	1	$120.00	$120.00

Grand Total (USD):	**$1,672.00**

Notes / Terms
Planting for 6 street trees Fall 2026

Powered by wave

Tree locations walk: Sept 17, 2026
Participants: Woody Coe, Kenny Shipley, Jamie Byron, Charlotte Baker-Shenk

Woody requests that we mark spots where we want to plant. Then he will come check for any issues.

Observations:
Soil area near RR tracks east of Tommeez Pizza would be a good spot for the honey locust.

301 E German (home recently sold) needs stump grinding – noted already on work order from Viking (#2). A great spot for an elm.

Note re: stump grinding
Jamie says we need at least 16" down, preferably 18 to 20" deep.
Woody thinks that both Bartlett and Viking have huge grinders that can go down as far as 2'.
Need to check on this with Erik. (Update: Viking can down to 18")

The two failing Japanese cherries: we already agreed to have Viking take down the westernmost tree (#4) and stump grind.

Concerns about getting any equipment in there to grind stumps due to pervasive rocks? Perhaps would be wise to just start with a small tree (like a 1 gallon pot) with a single leader.

211 E German (purple house)—need stump grinding (has pot the top of the stump right now). Then easy to plant here. need add to Viking order after talk with owner? (Update: owner not want tree there – because water line and roots pushing up sidewalk. Prefer where old cherry)

Town Hall knee wall: can we tie this into the curb? But impacts on passengers opening car doors?
Woody will send some recommended stonemason name(s).

E German ginkgo in front of Shepherd's Blessing/dog Library— Bricks: will need more room for the tree to grow, already buckling on North end. Tree Comm needs get vendor.

203 W German — possible location if can avoid waterline from the curb stop. Move 1.5 feet away? Or, perhaps better to plant near the sign that says residential parking/no U-turn? It's

just north of the house line at edge of property. Note where there's already an indentation. Name of homeowner: Will Miller (876–9476.

North of 203 is a crab apple that Viking needs to remove and grind down. Also need to make the well larger.

There may be 2 to 3 possible planting spots between 203 and 209. Jamie previously talked with the owners.

213 W German — major work was done by the town here. Tree was removed. Now, no basement flooding.
Seems very possible to add a tall slender tree here just beyond the sign to the west.

215 W German— avoid doing anything around this house.

North of 215 W German— need a bonded contractor that does cityscape tree wells. Woody mentioned a huge company "Gall" which works with concrete. Ask to see if they could do this kind of work.
Jamie also wondered about getting a WV company
We will need to have permit with the state for work here.

Jamie: this is a potential area to add 2 trees

East of 307 W German—huge old tree showing signs of diminishment. Nearby healthy redbud that Jamie could prune to a leader.

German and Shoe Lane— add a red bud here at the corner.

313 W German— add another tree here near the West end (in front of building with white siding, south of the sidewalk).

Apex brick building— Jamie says need dig up this maple, has never been doing well. Would be a good spot for an elm.

Corner of German and Brown's— potential to add 3 trees.

Need to check with the residents. Need attentive to parking spaces. Also see 323 W German.

NB: need removed poison ivy on tree near log cabin home (northside on West German)

South side of W German:

314 — add tree here? (church needs parking spaces on Sundays)

312– easy to add a tree here in dirt just west of green home

309– good spot?

304– could add 2 small trees here or 2+1

302 (newer brick building)— avoiding waterline, could add small tree

220– owner says can plant in his yard (would need clarify this is a town tree regarding maintenance)

220 —good space for tree in sidewalk near stop sign and other sign. (Need state highway approval.)

216– also space in sidewalk near lead walk entrance (also need highway approval)

214– there is space for a tree here in sidewalk, but looks like owner has paid for new brickwork…

210 (Trinity Parish house)— add small tree in dirt west of water meter plus another small tree on east side

In front of Trinity Church in dirt area— could add 2-3 small trees (note failing tree lilac)

Princess Street

Potentially add small tree in sidewalk across from middle of Dogwood's brick building.

Talk with Lori about adding a tree or two along the sidewalk between Dogwood and Hive House. (Christman owns the garden.)

In front of Specialty— in iris tree box, add small tree— plant the Yoshino cherry here?(note electric line) NB: there is a very small hickory growing in the middle of the iris bed. Do anything with that?

Back to East German St.

On the southside across from Ranchero— add 2 small trees on either side of failing lilac

204 E German (Sue Kemnitzer's)— great spot in dirt near driveway east of her home. Called Sue, who agreed to have a smoke tree planted there.

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Jamie wondered about planting a large tree like an elm or sugar maple at Amanda and Jeremy's on Duke and high Street

Botanic Name	Common Name	Cultivars to Consider	Large?	Compact?	Full Sun?	Part Shade?	Full Shade?	Powerline?	Sidewalk?	Street?	Buildings?	Sewer?	Park?	Native?	Specimen?	Evergreen?	Spring Inter?	Fall Inter?	Winter Inter?	Notes
Acer griseum	Paperbark Maple		0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	non-native, excellent traits. Currently one on corner of German and King.
Acer palmatum	Japanese Maple	Bloodgood'	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	
Amelanchier leavis	Allegheny Serviceberry		0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0.5	0	desirable multistem form and ornamental traits. Can defoliate in stress, however. Don't overuse
Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam		0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0.5	1	1	
Cercis canadensis	Redbud		0	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0.5	0	fast growing, adaptable but short-lived. Don't overuse
Crataegus x	Thornless Hawthorn	Winter King'	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0.5	0	0	1	1	0	prominent berry all winter (currently on German St), can get Hawthorn Apple Rust. Don't overuse
Magnolia virginiana	Sweetbay Magnolia		0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	0	1	multi-stem form, plant in moist acidic soil
Magnolia x spp.	Deciduous Hybrid Magnolia	Anne', 'Randy', 'Jane'	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0.5	0	many varieties, small upright multi-stem trees with large flowers in early spring. May need treatment for scale.
Ostrya virginiana	Hop Hornbeam		0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	0	excellent adaptability tolerating drought and clay soil.
Prunus caroliniana	Carolina Cherry Laurel		0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0.5	0	1	1	0	1	
Prunus x	Hybrid Cherry	Okame' 'Yoshino'	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	very early bloomer, upright habit, useful and well received. There are many other Cherries but without this unique upright form
Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood		0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	Iconic beautiful tree. Try to site with afternoon shade but quite adaptable (well drained sites only). 'Cherokee Princess' (white) and 'Cherokee Brave' (pink) reported to have increased anthracnose resistance
Chionanthus virginicus	Fringe Tree		0	1	1	0	0	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0.5	0	low branched, needs space at ground level, or pruning. Excellent tree, adaptable. Don't overuse b/c Emerald Ash Borer
Cotonus obovatus	Smoke Tree		0	1	1	1	0	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	
Malus spp.	Crabapple		0	1	1	1	0	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	0	0.5	0	0	1	0	0	many varieties, look for "small, persistent fruits" and appropriate habit, otherwise can be messy on sidewalks.
Taxodium distichum	Bald Cypress	Lindsey Skyward'	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0.5	1	0		1	0	adaptable and long lived deciduous conifer. Heat tolerant and underused. 'Lindsey Skyward' is smaller, narrower, upright form than species. Remarkably adaptable and long-lived. 'Pevee Minarette' is another dwarf cultivar.
Acer rubrum	Red Maple		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	fast growing, adaptable, surface root system heaves sidewalks, use carefully (not around infrastructure)
Cedrus atlantica	Atlas Cedar		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	
Cryptomeria japonica	Japanese Cedar		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Gingko biloba	Gingko		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	
Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis	Thornless Honey Locust		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	produces a light dappled shade, adaptable, fast growing, leaves so small they rarely need cleanup
Juniperus virginiana	Red Cedar		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.5	1	
Nyssa sylvatica	Black Gum		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	excellent traits for urban sites (adaptable, heat and drought tolerant, deeply rooted, etc.) Species is slow growing, but cultivars like 'Wildfire' are quite fast growers. Some cultivars have more upright/narrow habit
Thuja occidentalis	White Cedar, Arborvitae		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	
Ulmus americana, Ulmus x	American/Hybrid Elms		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	Large tree, incredibly fast growing. Choose disease resistant varieties. Note: U.a. 'Jefferson' has better structual form than some other American Elm cv's. A recommended hybrid is 'Accolade'. Some cv's are smaller.
Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia		1	1	1	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Celtis occidentalis	Hackberry		1	0	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	underused in the landscape, adaptable, site carefully, can be considered messy
Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet Gum	Rotundifola	1	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	adaptable and under-represented tree. Can be messy so select a seedless variety when near infrastructure
Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore		1	0	1	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	
Acer saccharam	Sugar Maple		1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	excellent ornamental traits, not heat tolerant, surface roots, don't overuse
Carya illinoinensis	Northern Pecan		1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Carya laciniosa	Shellbark Hickory		1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Diospyros virginiana	Persimmon		1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	fruiting tree, interesting bark, can be messy if on sidewalk/street. Dioecious
Metasequoia glyptostroboides	Dawn Redwood		1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	
Quercus Alba	White Oak		1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	0	
Quercus muehlenbergia	Chinkapin Oak		1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	0	slow growing, adaptable to high pH Use in (7+ pH) soils, long-lived member of the white oak family.