

Sylvania Tree Commission

January Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 23, 2026

Time: 4:30–6:00 PM

Location: Parks & Forestry Building

1. Welcome / Call to Meeting

The meeting was called to order on **January 23, 2026**.

Attendance Taken

Present:

- Brady Kohlenberg, Chair
- Anthony Haddad, Vice Chair
- Stacey Leffler, Secretary/Treasurer
- Helen Michaels, Public Relations Liaison
- Margie Ott, City Adviser – Parks & Forestry
- Shawn Murphy, Council Liaison – Parks & Forestry Committee
- Kevin McGreevy (*Pending Member*)
- Beth Youngpeter (*Pending Member*)
- Brian Kezur, President, Sylvania Area Joint Recreation District (Guest)

Absent:

- Rosey Duran
- Judi Young

Beth Youngpeter was introduced as a pending member. She is a 4th-grade math and science teacher at Winterfield Venture Academy, a City of Sylvania resident, participates in Camp Frontier, and has volunteered with Brady Kohlenberg through Scouting activities.

2. Motion to Accept Previous Meeting Minutes

The **November 2025 meeting minutes** were presented.

Motion: To approve the November 2025 meeting minutes

Outcome: Approved

3. Business for Discussion

a) SAJRD – Future Recommendations

Brian Kezur, President of the **Sylvania Area Joint Recreation District (SAJRD)**, provided an overview of the organization. SAJRD is a governmental entity jointly operated by the City of Sylvania, Sylvania Township, and Sylvania City Schools. The organization oversees nine properties, including Tam-O-Shanter and the Sylvania Recreation Center. The SAJRD Board consists of appointees from all three governing bodies, including Shawn Murphy, representing the City of Sylvania.

Mr. Kezur requested collaboration with the Sylvania Tree Commission regarding **Veterans Memorial Field**, specifically the **Veterans Memorial Grove**, where scheduled tree maintenance

has been neglected and requires revitalization. The goal of SAJRD is to establish the Grove as a cornerstone community space honoring veterans.

Per City ordinance, the Tree Commission may provide advisory input regarding tree species, planting locations, spacing, and long-term tree health (reference: November 2024 Tree Commission minutes).

Requested assistance includes:

1. Site review
2. Recommendations for tree replacement, species, spacing, and placement
3. Guidance to help create a historically appropriate and visually significant memorial landscape

Additional information provided:

- Funding will be supported through the SAJRD operating levy
- A landscape architect is developing hardscape concepts
- Hardscape elements include signage, pathways, accessibility improvements, flagpoles, and the relocation of large markers
- Veterans Memorial is intended to remain a *living memorial*
- Collaboration will include Heritage Sylvania, the American Legion Post, and the grounds crew
- Target timeline is flexible, with short term goals for use by **Memorial Day 2026** and **Independence Day 2026**, and plans for long term goals

Motion: To collaborate with SAJRD on the Veterans Memorial Grove project

Motion by: Shawn Murphy

Seconded by: Stacey Leffler

Outcome: Motion carried

Maps, photographs, and working plans will be provided. Margie Ott located a historical hand-drawn map to be uploaded to the shared drive. Brady Kohlenberg has a list of veterans associated with memorial trees. Brady Kohlenberg and Anthony Haddad have conducted multiple site visits to the Veterans Memorial.

Members of the Tree Commission met on February 21st to review the site. A document has been started on the Google Drive for recommendations. Looking ahead, the STC should have final recommendations to SAJRD by March 15th

b) 2026 Commission Goals – Tree City USA Growth Award

Margie Ott reported that the Growth Award application has advanced through the **Ohio Department of Forestry** and has been submitted to the **Arbor Day Foundation**.

Brady Kohlenberg encouraged commissioners to review the **Tree City USA Growth Award Activities** list and select activities early in the year. A minimum of **10 points** is required. Potential activities discussed included: **E10, E4, B6, and E23**. Commissioners noted that progress toward goals is already underway and emphasized avoiding last-minute planning.

c) Spring Planting

Margie Ott reported difficulty identifying viable street planting locations. Residents on **Largberg Lane** were notified of upcoming planting; many initially declined due to concerns about sewer

lines and sidewalk damage, some stemming from misinformation. After follow-up education, several residents agreed to the planting.

Helen Michaels suggested an educational article in **The Sylvania Advantage** to clarify sidewalk responsibilities, City maintenance roles, and the value of urban trees, noting that HOA leadership may not always have accurate information.

d) Arbor Day 2026

- Brady Kohlenberg will contact the **Sylvania Chamber of Commerce** to confirm details of the Arbor Day event.
- The Commission discussed the possibility of an additional school-based Arbor Day event.
- A committee meeting for the **America 250 Heritage Tree Planting** will be held on **Monday, January 26, 2026**. Stacey Leffler, Anthony Haddad, and Brady Kohlenberg will attend. Following that meeting, the Commission will determine whether to pursue an alternate Arbor Day event. Further discussion will occur at the February meeting.
- Tree ordering timelines were discussed, including the possibility of using a small tree rather than a sapling for the America 250 Heritage planting.

e.) Resident Requests for Street Tree Planting

Margie Ott proposed creating a City website option that allows residents to request street trees via a form or designated contact number.

Key points discussed: This will be a goal for the next spring planting season. Residents will not select tree species. The Parks & Forestry Department will determine appropriate species based on site conditions. Website verbiage and process development will be required

4. Projects / Topics to Remain on the Agenda

a) Downtown Project – Phase II

Anthony Haddad, Helen Michaels, and Brady Kohlenberg attended the Phase II downtown open house. No final design decisions or specific tree species have been selected. Tree planting is anticipated for Spring 2027.

Brady Kohlenberg will contact City staff regarding curb-adjacent tree planting practices to support long-term tree health.

b) Erie / Monroe Street Roundabout (2027)

Information is available on the shared drive. No updates at this time.

c) Commission Vacancies

One vacancy remains. A City resident is needed to fill the position.

d) Heritage Tree Planting Planning

The **America 250 Heritage Tree Planting** is scheduled for **April 27, 2026**.

A committee meeting will be held on **Monday, January 26, 2026, from 4:00–5:00 PM**.

e) Monroe / US-23 Interchange

No updates at this time.

5. Upcoming Events / Calendar

- **February 27** – Meeting
- **March 27** – Meeting
- **April TBD** – Sylvania Arbor Day (Chamber of Commerce)
- **April 11** – Spring Work Day (McNealy Park)
- **April 24** – Meeting
- **April 27** – America 250 Heritage Tree Planting
- **May 13** – Tree City Awards (Maumee)
- **May 22** – Meeting
- **August 28** – Meeting
- **September 25** – Meeting
- **October 10** – Fall Work Day
- **October 23** – Meeting
- **November 20** – Meeting

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **6:10 PM**.

Sylvania Tree Commission Update

The Sylvania Tree Commission met on January 23, 2026, to begin the new year with a focus on collaboration, planning, and community engagement. A key highlight was a presentation from the Sylvania Area Joint Recreation District (SAJRD) regarding plans to revitalize the Veterans Memorial Grove at Veterans Memorial Field. Commissioners voted to collaborate with SAJRD by offering guidance on tree species, placement, and long-term care as the grove is restored as a living memorial honoring local veterans.

Commissioners also began early planning for the 2026 Tree City USA Growth Award and discussed spring planting efforts. Members addressed resident concerns related to street trees and emphasized the importance of ongoing public education about the benefits of urban trees and infrastructure considerations.

Planning is underway for **Arbor Day 2026**, including coordination with the Sylvania Chamber of Commerce, as well as preparations for the **America 250 Heritage Tree Planting** scheduled for April 27, 2026.

Additional updates included continued involvement in Phase II of the Downtown Project. With one commission vacancy remaining, the Tree Commission welcomes city residents interested in supporting and strengthening Sylvania's urban forest. 