

Tree Commission Meeting
January 31, 2022
7:30-9:00PM

Attendees:

Meeting Facilitator: Barry Stahl

Meeting Notes: Brad Ball

Other Tree Commissioners: MaryLee Haughwout, Lester Scheuermann, Jackie Sabath

City Council: Mayor Celina Benitez, Council member Stolfus, Council member Chesek. Council member Tarlau

City Staff: Kourosh Kamali – City Manager, Alma Ferrufino – Code Compliance Acting Director, Matt Madeira – Consulting Arborist, Rocio Latorre – Roadside Tree Care Expert and city staff liaison to the Tree Commission

Community Members: Jon Pattee, Ayelet Hines, Robin Bliss, Hilary Varga, , Shivali Shah, Maria Paoletti, Arthur Silverman

Minutes:

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
 - a. Edits to previous minutes required: The AUDI period is already 6 months into it, Lester will send the change and minutes will be approved outside of the meeting.
2. No general resident concerns (not related to Spring Park) were raised.
3. Presentation of Spring Park tree protection plan options by Matt Madeira new consulting arborist:
 - a. Design A gives lots of staging area, and would be least expensive, typical of a housing development plan, and allocates much more space for the contractor to be working there. This option would likely cost \$4-5K.
 - b. Design B would require an arborist to investigate and show what roots are there, and then make decision based on what is found in the field. It should still be enough room to construct the labyrinth and sidewalk, but it's tight. This option would likely cost \$4-5K as well.
 - c. Design C uses root matting to extend the protected root zone to allow more space for construction to occur and would be more protective of the roots. This would be the most expensive of the 3 options. This is also the most protective. This option would likely cost closer to \$8K.
 - d. Matt responded to questions from the TC:

- i. Timing is important – construction in the middle of the summer would be detrimental. Now, spring, or fall would be the better time to conduct construction.
 - ii. The city should consider having the hemlock treated prophylactically for wooly adelgid prior to construction.
 - iii. If the woodchips can be reused on site, then it would reduce the cost of option C.
 - iv. The other trees on site are likely to suffer damage from construction activity as well, so those as well as the two street trees should be protected. However, with the planting of new material on site there will be decompaction of the soil.
 - v. Matt could prepare a narrative for the entire plan if need be to guide planting materials and techniques to maximize the benefits to the existing trees.
 - vi. Matt would recommend a certified arborist for the services, in particular Josh Nadler of Bartlett. The order of sequence would be to stake out the footprint of the labyrinth, then the root investigation, then placement of prevention measures. If the placement of the labyrinth needed to be adjusted, there's a way to do that.
- e. Members of the community shared thoughts and concerns, and Matt responded:
- i. John Pattee indicated that an arborist in the neighborhood observed that site conditions may have caused the roots to extend farther into park. Additionally, there are at least two inaccuracies in the base plan from UMD, the actual root zone of the northern most red oak is 7' off in plan from real-life, and the drip line is indicated as much smaller than measured on site.
 - ii. Hillary Varga raised a question about the proposed 12" grading on site and how it would impact the trees. Matt responded that this is a real concern and that as the plan is solidified it will need to be further explored how it impacts the roots in this particular area.
 - iii. John Pattee raised another concern that experts at University of Georgia rate Eastern Hemlock's tolerance of disturbance of very poor.
 - iv. Ayelete is concerned that the labyrinth will impact the root zone of the redbud and serviceberry trees. Matt indicated that any disturbance can

potentially impact any trees, but that smaller/younger specimens are more resilient. Again, he reiterated that the plan would need to be addressed again once the LOD for proposed site features is staked out.

- v. Robin questioned about the extent of the excavation relative to the scale of the site plan and the option for a no-build plan. Matt indicated that there should be consideration of an “over dig” zone expected, so the actual extent of grading would likely extend beyond the landscape designer’s limits of disturbance in plan. He also mentioned that the labyrinth design could potentially be engineered to sit more lightly on the ground without excavation, but that is outside of his professional expertise.
- vi. Arthur raised a question whether the position of “do no harm” had been considered. Matt felt that this was not a terribly challenging site, and that with some fine tuning it’s unlikely that harm will come to any of the trees. Matt felt very confident a positive outcome should be expected, but that it’s impossible to guarantee with 100% certainty.

f. Tree Commission deliberated:

- i. Jackie felt we don’t have accurate information regarding the scale of the drawings, and the first step should be to make sure we know what we’re working with.
- ii. Lester is concerned about actual extent of the root zone.
- iii. Brad mentioned that the sequence should likely be to stake the labyrinth and then investigate the root zone to determine what we’re working with before moving forward.
- iv. Barry raised the point that the ordinance states that the exceptional tree is protected from any excavation within 50’, and that short of a no-excavation plan it doesn’t appear to be an option to move forward with implementing this design.
- v. MaryLee thinks the city attorney may need to help us clarify the ordinance, because it seems to indicate that perhaps these activities aren’t entirely prohibited, but rather that if these activities are to be undertaken, then there needs to be due diligence and a permit issued.

- vi. Luke clarified that when this work is being considered, then an investigation needs to be undertaken to determine if a permit can be issued.
 - vii. MaryLee summarized that our written recommendation to Council will be a properly scaled plan, a stake-out of the disturbances, and an investigation of where the roots are, in addition to input from the city attorney.
 - viii. Shivali suggested to just move the labyrinth to an area of the park where it's not going to impact the hemlock or other trees. She also questioned who in the city would ensure the plan is being executed and monitored as planned. Mr. Kamali responded that this would be a Public Works project and that Matt would be on site to ensure the process was conducted properly as well.
 - ix. Mr. Kamali will reach out to Dr. Sullivan to find out if there's a compelling reason not to adjust the location of the labyrinth in order to minimize impact.
 - x. The tree commission will synthesize our recommendations in written form and then regroup to decide how best to proceed based on what we have learned.
4. Next meeting date: TBD
- a. Guest - Carole Barth, Manager, Tree Conservation and Conservation Landscaping Programs, PG Department of the Environment

ACTION ITEMS (ADD UPDATE IN ORANGE TO SAVE TIME)

1. MaryLee will confirm the address of Newton tree for pruning with low branches and share with Rocio. **DONE**
2. Review the YouTube video Lester provided to better understand the AUTI program functionality. Follow up with questions and consider incorporating the request into our FY23 budget request.
3. Rocio will send notification letters to residents getting street trees from levee county replacement planting.
4. **New street trees need to be added to the inventory.**
5. MaryLee will write an article on 2021 accomplishments for the Message. **DONE**

6. Rocio: Send to the TC the revised list of tree species that the city has been providing with Tree Permits. TC to review and comment to ensure native canopy trees are being used.
7. Lester and Valerie: Coordinate reviewing tree inventory software.
8. Jackie will reach out to Horace Henry to ask for recommendations on tree inventory systems.
9. Rocio will work with Public Works on household notifications, much like was done with sidewalk work, for new trees in tree boxes - NEED UPDATE ON LEVEE PLANTING
10. Brad will finalize Exceptional Tree Nomination and then will send it to our city clerk to get it on the next city council meeting agenda. **PENDING**
11. TC: Revise our tree removal assessment form as indicated above. **DONE**
12. Brad & Zachary: Come up with a proposal to reach out to tree companies to ensure they are educated on our tree ordinance requirements. We should also investigate other models of putting responsibility on the tree care provider for violating the ordinance. Zachary can share examples of other municipalities that specifically place liability on tree companies. But starting with outreach might be the best first step.