

Tree Commission Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2022
7:30-9:00PM

Meeting Facilitator: Brad

Meeting Notes: MaryLee

Attendees: Brad Ball, Lester Scheuermann, Barry Stahl, Jackie Sabath, Luke Chesek, Gladys Sanchez, Andy Doyle

1. Introductions - welcome prospective Commissioners. Welcomed Andy Doyle as a prospective Tree Commissioner.
2. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. Minutes from September 13, 2022 are approved.
3. Toole Design Group
 - a. Jim Elliot from Toole Design welcomed Tree Commission input on priorities. They are working with the city on a plan to make the city's streets safer and more walkable and bikeable. A few Tree Commissioners did attend the public meeting and contributed thoughts but the Tree Commission meeting provided the opportunity to provide tree-focused input. MaryLee opined that a priority is climate resilience and stormwater mitigation, that is where the money for grants right now. Trees can provide big benefits but the emphasis should be on planting more large canopy trees. There are a lot of conflict in urban environment. Generally we are looking for more space for trees without major conflicts with utilities - water, gas, overhead wires, and if we can widen tree boxes to create more planting space, create one-way streets in a few locations, or generally look for areas to widen. MaryLee mentioned walking a sidewalk with good shade cover versus not can be a difference of 10 degrees cooler.
 - b. Jackie said she attended a breakout and there was discussion about the sidewalks being uneven and difficult to navigate for lots of people. Jackie asked if the use of flexipave helps mitigate that unevenness due to roots in the future.
 - c. Brad asked about whether traffic slowing and other calming techniques will be incorporated into the plan.
 - d. **ACTION:** Luke asked the Tree Commission to work on a list of priority tree boxes for expanding to get to Jim in the next couple weeks.

- e. **ACTION:** Gladys will look into whether the city has any maps of underground utilities.
4. Communications and outreach
- a. Jackie walked through past articles for the Message and went over schedule and word limits for the Message. There will be 6 newsletters a year and articles are limited to 200 words due to budget cuts.
 - b. Topics for the next few newsletters include:
 - i. Jan/Feb: Year in Review (MaryLee)
 - ii. Mar/Apr: Ordinance rules with a focus on contractors (Brad)
 - iii. May/Jun: Highlight a Tree (Barry)
 - iv. Future ideas: More on AUTI, who we are and what the Tree Commission does
 - c. **ACTION:** Folks work on articles.
 - d. Discussion on Tree Commission website. There is no specific Tree Commission website that is being maintained. There is an old address that prior resident Gorav set up and is still available but is supposed to sunset. Do we want to add resources to the City webpage? Is there City capacity to work with us or a Tree Commission who wants to take this on? For now, status quo.
5. Tree Inventory Software Update
- a. Lester gave an update on the software and what he's learned and some of the capabilities. He shared the number of city trees and number of different species, as well as a breakdown on native, naturalized, and invasive.
 - b. Jackie and MaryLee helped validate some data and found a few issues.
 - c. **ACTION:** Lester asked the Tree Commission to think about what threshold are we comfortable with regarding error? Or in other words, what is the appropriate reliability?
 - d. **ACTION:** Future action to showcase this information to the Council in the winter.
6. Safety vests with identification for Tree Commissioners
- a. Commissioners agreed that safety vests are a good idea. Public Works can buy these and Gladys asked that we get the information to her and Rocio.
 - b. **ACTION:** MaryLee will make formal request to Public Works on safety vests.
7. Winter maintenance plans and TC input (Rocio) - 10 minutes
- a. Gladys shared that they have a list from residents and Matt is doing assessments. MaryLee asked about Tree Commission input and noted that we

can pull dead trees or those in poor or hazardous shape from AUTI. If we can see the list, we can add to.

- b. At this point, the only priority set to be removed is the ambrosia infected oak at 4208 28th Street that has already been assessed by Matt.
 - c. **ACTION:** Gladys will share the list with the Tree Commission for input and review and let us know the proposed time frame.
8. City projects
- a. 34th Street
 - i. On hold. They are going to work on another design plan. This is something Toole Design is helping the city with and this project is back to the planning stage.
 - b. Arundel Green Street
 - i. Gladys didn't have an update except that the plan is at 90%. MaryLee emphasized the need for more information because trees are to be planted in a median and there is a stormwater mitigation plan that may or may not remove large canopy trees
 - ii. **ACTION:** Gladys will find out more about what is happening.
9. Levee planting tree replacements follow up
- a. Lester created a Dropbox folder of 46 dead trees. These are largely redbuds, oaks. County said its contractor will do site inspections in the coming weeks. MaryLee shared that there is a 2 year warranty but that the contractor is supposed to maintain the trees and replace promptly.
10. 2023-24 Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps and [Prince George's County Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program](#)
- a. MaryLee attended the webinar for the County grant program. One of the priorities is preserving tree canopy and there is a funding opportunity to support historic and native large canopy trees in the Northwest Branch watershed. MaryLee shared this excited her because it is something we've talked about - the need to help resident preserve their large trees. This takes resources and isn't something the city is able to provide. We have the infrastructure with contractors but maybe not the capacity to implement. MaryLee said this could be where a Conservation Corp member placed with the city could help. Lots of ifs and more discussion needed.
 - b. **ACTION:** Luke will follow up with city to see if interested in a Conservation Corps position.
 - c. **ACTION:** MaryLee will follow up with Public Works to see if they are in support and inquire about capacity to submit a grant like this. MaryLee is willing to help

write, if so. If any Tree Commissioners are interested in working on this - let MaryLee know.

11. Next meeting date: January 5

Items not discussed due to time: Tree ordinance revisions.

UPDATES

- Draft RFP for climate resilient trees sent to Rocio and shared with City Attorney for review 10/21/22
- Pepco work postponed due to Hurricane Ian. Awaiting update. Still need to finalize the tree replacement planting plan.
- City consulting arborist asked for advice on Crape Myrtle scale infestation
- Public works will prioritize small non-levee dead tree removal after leaf collection

OLD ACTION ITEMS

- MaryLee will follow up with Carole Barth with PG County on tree canopy analysis (ongoing, non-responsive). **Sent 4 emails**
- MaryLee will look into heritage/exceptional tree language in neighboring jurisdictions.
- 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.