

Tree Commission Minutes
March 9, 2023
7:30-9:00PM

Meeting Facilitator: Barry

Meeting Notes: MaryLee

Attendees: Barry Stahl, Jackie Sabath, Andy Doyle, Judy Alba, Lester Scheuermann, MaryLee Haughwout, Matt Madeira, Luke Chesek, Gladys Sanchez, Mira Greiser

Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. **ACTION:** MaryLee had edits to the meeting minutes and she will finalize
2. Guest: City consulting arborist
 - a. Matt Madeira is the consulting arborist for the city and this meeting was an opportunity for the Tree Commission to check in with him on how things are going. His role is to assess trees and make recommendations to the city. Matt said the process is going well. In terms of the process, no revisions at this time. Most residents care for the trees and want to make sure the tree isn't a hazard. Ninety percent of the time, the tree needs to be removed and waivers are granted.
 - b. As for trends Matt stated there are still issues with ambrosia beetle borers and fungus due to climate change. Particularly red and white oaks. There may be instances to treat prophylactically.
 - c. In the cases where a healthy tree is issued a permit, he recommends canopy trees. In a recent case, the resident was interested in fruiting trees and he recommended paw-paw since they can get pretty large. He didn't think an approved tree list was necessary but that it could be helpful as a community resource. There was also discussion about the requirement in the code for a supplementary letter to the city manager on the factors under 12B when considering a permit.
 - d. Andy asked about sourcing trees and MaryLee responded that it would be a good additional resource to develop. It is difficult to plant a tree yourself and now there are a lot of different programs.

- e. **ACTION:** Andy and Jackie volunteered to create a recommended tree list for residents
3. Updates on City-related projects (Rocio/Gladys) - 15 minutes
- a. Future sidewalks and rain garden plans
 - i. MaryLee asked about the 32nd St rain gardens and Matt's opinion on impact to the trees planted there. Matt didn't think there were too many conflicts. One oak would need to be dug up and planted in the rain garden. MaryLee noted challenges with that in the past when an inexperienced contractor did that on 28th St.
 - b. RFP for Climate Resilient Trees
 - i. One bid received from Casey Trees. With the city attorney for review.
 - c. Private property replacements
 - i. MaryLee explained when a permit is given, the resident has an option to plant a tree to replace the removed tree. In a few cases, this option has been selected and she asked how the city is monitoring whether the tree is planted or not. Gladys did not know and said she can ask.
 - ii. **ACTION:** MaryLee will send the list of addresses of private property replacements to Gladys and Rocio and ask for an update.
4. Discussion on ideas for Celebrating 20 years as tree city - 20 minutes
- a. Draft ideas we discussed for Arbor Day and some acknowledgement celebration. The Tree Commission will organize a spring planting and messaging related to the 20 years. Rocio ordered the new Tree City signs and PW will install. We can have time on the City Council agenda near Arbor Day to sign the proclamation. We can also request the city fly the Tree City USA flag. We can plant a commemorative tree in a public space.
 - b. **ACTION:** Andy, Barry, Jackie and MaryLee will work on plans for the spring planting and 20th year acknowledgement.
5. Safer Streets Task Force (Luke) - 5 minutes
- a. Luke explained that the city is pursuing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding with DOT. To go after a particular grant opportunity the city needs to do a few things. One of which is creating a Safer Street Task Force. Luke mentioned relevancy to the Tree Commission and if there was a volunteer to participate. Barry recommended Brad Ball because of his expertise.

- b. **ACTION:** Luke will email Brad to ask about serving on the Safer Streets Task Force
6. Annual tree box review (Lester) - 10 minutes
 - a. Lester outlined a proposal for Tree Commissioners over the spring-fall to walk and review all trees for issues. Idea would be to get a handle on the trees and maintenance needs, concerns, etc.
 - b. This would be a requirement for the Commissioners to do - although someone could do less, and others more, depending upon availability. No concerns were voiced.
 - c. Barry will provide a workshop for Commissioners on issues to look for May 20.
 - d. **DATE:** Tree health workshop with Barry, May 20.
7. AUTI presentation and next steps (Lester) - 3 minutes
 - a. March 31 at 1PM confirmed. Jackie expressed interest.
8. Spring planting (Barry/All) - 10 minutes
 - a. The Tree Commission will organize a spring planting in connection to Arbor Day.
 - b. Rocio sent the Tree Mendous Maryland list.
9. Pruning Update
 - a. 98% of the city pruned. Thank you to all who have helped. A few areas left to do.
10. City Newsletter - The Message entry due March 10
 - a. MaryLee said she'd write a short piece about pruning and a save the date for Arbor Day.
11. Next meeting date: May 4, 2023

UPDATES

- Levee planting tree replacements - 4 locations for replacement trees confirmed with County. Date of spring planting TBD
- Pepco tree replacements - 11 locations for new trees. Date of spring planting TBD

OPEN ACTION ITEMS

- Crepe myrtle infestation: Lester will reach out to Steve to find out about what DC is doing. Jackie will reach out to the Hyattsville arborist. COMPLETE
- Gladys to send a list of trees removed during winter maintenance to Lester so that he can update the tree inventory.
- Gladys will look into whether the city has any maps of underground utilities.
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- 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.