

TREE COMMISSION MINUTES

May 21, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Vickers, Chairman, Dranesville District
Sheila Allen, VA Cooperative Extension
Jeanne Kadet, Braddock District
Butch Loughry, Fairfax County Park Authority
Jim McGlone, Vice Chairman, VA Dept. of Forestry
Dragan Momcilovic, Hunter Mill District
Chet McLaren, Member At-Large
Jerry Peters, NV Soil & Water Conservation District

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rick Ayers, Providence District
Mekell Mikell, Lee District
Scott Pearson, Mason District
Eleanor Quigley, Mt. Vernon District
Bill Schoonmaker, Sully District

VACANT POSITION: Environmental Quality Advisory Council
Springfield District

STAFF PRESENT: Linda Barfield, Urban Forester II, UFMD
Keith Cline, Director, UFMD
Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar, Urban Forester II, UFMD
Hugh Whitehead, Urban Forester III, UFMD

VISTORS PRESENT: Rick Healy, EQAC

Call to Order

Chairman Vickers called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm.

Minutes

The April minutes were reviewed and approved by the commission.

Introductions

Chairman Vickers initiated introductions of attendees including Rick Healy as a visitor to the Tree Commission and a representative of EQAC and new UFMD staff, Linda Barfield and Rachel Griesmer-Zakhar.

Fairfax County Tree Preservation Ordinance Presentation:

Chairman Vickers introduced Director Keith Cline to give the first part of a three part presentation on the Fairfax County Tree Preservation Ordinances and updates to other applicable laws in Virginia. Director Cline reviewed the ordinances established by Fairfax County through the years, how it has changed from the 1970s, how it is implemented and details about the Public Facilities Manual (PFM) and zoning requirements for tree preservation. Handouts were provided on the PFM and a list of land development resources and ordinances which were introduced. Several discussions ensued about development tree credits, tree inventory requirements and a case study presented by Keith Cline on development and potential tree retention scenarios. Developer deviations were discussed including the proportion of plans which request deviations and neighboring tree concerns during development and their effect on tree credits. Planting incentives for native or other favorable trees were discussed and commissioners agreed that they are ineffective as written. Case study discussion led to a discussion on infill lot development

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and the associated lack of formal tree conservation plans for these development types. The presentation was concluded with a request for a copy of the presentation to commissioners by Commissioner Kadet.

Tree Forum Update

Extension Agent Allen announced that the last Tree Forum on April 22nd was held in the Braddock District with no future forums planned for the summer. Upon the suggestion to begin planning for fall meetings, Chairman Vickers mentioned that the Great Falls Citizens' Association (GFCA) requested a similar presentation to that at the Tree Forum at the McLean Community Center in March. GFCA requested that this material be presented at their general meeting in September. Chairman Vickers said that the topics of stream restorations and RPA incursions were of particular interest to the residents of Great Falls.

Friends of Trees (FOT)

Chairman Vickers announced that the Friends of Trees awards will be presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting on June 2nd at 10:45am. Director Kline said that the certificates are ready and awaiting final signatures with the exception of Meredith Pierce, a current recipient. Urban Forester Hugh Whitehead agreed to provide the missing award to Chairman Vickers.

Springfest Update

Chairman Vickers gave accolades to all participants of the Springfest event by the Tree Commission. Many people came by the Tree Commission table and took information flyers. The Thank You Notes to the Trees project for children was successful. Commissioner Kadet presented 45 thank you notes written by participating children. Chairman Vickers and Commissioner Kadet noted that the tree ring activity was too difficult but there was a lot of enthusiasm for the Big Tree display. Providing a more precise location for residents to visit local big trees was discussed as an improvement for next year.

Website Update

Chairman Vickers praised the updates to the Tree Commission website but suggested that both current and past Friends of Trees award recipients be posted.

UFMD Report

Urban Forester Hugh Whitehead gave a presentation on the Tree Action Plan (TAP) which included recommendations for tracking implementation of its goals, strategies and tactics in response to questions that arose at the previous meeting. A discussion ensued about the current ineffective, redundant nature of the TAP where the current format was compared to a "wish list." Several commissioners noted a lack of focus and enforcement of the TAP and discussed prioritizing sections to implement on an annual or biannual basis. Director Kline suggested that Tree Commissioners develop a strategy for Urban Forest Management staff to begin drafting a management plan. Urban Forester Whitehead suggested that partners should be identified within the county (e.g. Channel 16, FCPS) and other organizations (e.g. Department of Forestry) to determine if portions of the TAP are already being addressed by non-UFMD staff. Vice Chairman McGlone suggested mining relevant information from the past EQAC reports to identify other agencies participating in tree related activities with the help of EQAC Representative Rick Healy. Commissioner McLaren discussed altering the current format of the TAP to reflect how the EQAC report is written by requesting each agency review the TAP and summarize their contributions. Urban Forester Whitehead concluded the discussion to suggest that the Tree Action Plan goals and

strategies be prioritized and that core recommendations should be analyzed and restructured to reflect recent legislation and needs of Fairfax County.

Commissioner Reports

- Vice Chairman McGlone reminded attendees of the Urban Forestry Roundtable Meeting on May 27 at the Fair Oaks Merrified Garden Center and mentioned that the summer Roundtable will discuss root health and include an air spade demonstration. He followed up on the Braddock Tree Forum noting that he had received two requests for similar presentations. One request was from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust to educate their residents on how to care for their trees.
- Extension Agent Allen announced that Master Gardeners have been present at plant clinics for the past four weeks. Several plant ailments have been commonly reported including cottony Camellia scale on holly, dogwood anthracnose and other issues with maples and birch this year.
- Commissioner Peters distributed 'Conservation Currents' newsletters from the NVSWCD. A petition for votes to for Commissioner Peters to remain in the position of Director was passed around the room. Commissioner Peters mentioned a demonstration of a root excavation for root rot diagnosis using the air spade device for a large oak in Great Falls.
- Commissioner McLaren described an extensive invasive weed problem in Flag Run Park in Springfield and his dismay at the lack of funding for the Park Authority to be able to manage invasive plants on all of its properties.
- Commissioner Kadet discussed the very well-attended Braddock Tree Forum. She received 10-12 very positive responses from the 45-50 attendees. She discussed the potential for repeating the event next year on Earth Day.
- EQAC Representative Healy noted that the State of the Environment Report has begun and that he will help to mine the past EQAC reports for information on Tree Action Plan activities.
- Chairman Vickers intends to confirm that the Friends of Trees awards recipients will be in attendance at the June 2nd Board Meeting. Urban Forester Whitehead will confirm that the Board of Supervisors is aware of the award presentation.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.