

## TREE COMMISSION MINUTES

*Draft*

**September 17, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Vickers, Chairman, Dranesville District  
Jeanne Kadet, Braddock District  
Sheila Allen, VA Cooperative Extension  
Chet McLaren, Member At-Large  
Jerry Peters, NV Soil & Water Conservation District  
Butch Loughry, Fairfax County Park Authority  
Dragan Momcilovic, Hunter Mill District  
Eleanor Quigley, Mt. Vernon District  
Rick Ayers, Providence District  
Rick Healy, Environmental Quality Advisory Council

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Pearson, Mason District  
Mekell Mikell, Lee District  
Bill Schoonmaker, Sully District  
Jim McGlone, Vice Chairman, VA Dept. of Forestry

VACANT POSITION: Springfield District

STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Habig-Myers, Urban Forester II, UFMD  
Keith Cline, Director, UFMD

VISTORS PRESENT: John Stokely, Fairfax County Park Authority  
Jane Ellen Saums, McEnearney Associates Realtors  
Ben Wiles, Dranesville District Supervisors Office

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Vickers called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

### **Presentation on Management of Non-Native Invasive Vegetation (Session 1 of 2) by John Stokely of the Fairfax County Park Authority**

John Stokely, Natural Resource Protection Branch Manager with the Park Authority, gave a presentation concerning their efforts at managing non-native, invasive (NNI) plants using a strategy of prevention and prioritization. They utilize an assessment and monitoring program to direct them toward saving the best first, either through protection or remediation. They have 6 programs, The IMA program (volunteers leading volunteers in removals), Early Detection Rapid Response (volunteer-run monitoring program) NNI Assessment Program, General NNI management (when funding is available, allows mgmt. at programmatic scale) Helping our Land Heal (Ecosystem Restoration program, currently attempting to implement agency wide) Mitigation Activities (in development projects). Their quick assessment program (NNIAP) considers 6 qualitative variables, and allowed them to assess approximately 3500 acres last year. Their current capacity for treatment is approximately 800 acres per year. Drivers of NNI infestations are excessive deer herbivory, storm water movements, and trails/other disturbances. They receive \$150,000 in dedicated annual funding, which is 1-2% of the estimated funding needed to adequately manage NNI vegetation across all park authority property.

### **Presentation of Real Estate and Trees by Jane Ellen Saums, of McEnearney Associates, Realtors**

This presentation touched on a few brief topics. National Association of Realtors now has a Green Designation. Realtors with this designation have taken courses on many aspects of green building, including the role trees play. Various statistics were shared in question and answer fashion regarding

benefits of trees, answering the question “does money grow on trees?” The Multiple Resource Information System (MRIS-our regional real estate listing service) now has 14 “high performance home” fields, such as solar panels, green certifications, energy star appliances, etc.

### **Discussion of Infill Issue**

Chairman Vickers raised the issue of infill developers, who seem to be trying to maximize home size on lots, requiring the removal of mature trees. Ben Wiles from Supervisor Faust’s office. Two Board Matters are being raised in the near future, one dealing with trees as they relate to county buildings; the other dealing with enforcement of current code, its interpretation, and the potential for changing code at the state level in regard to infill development. Chairman Vickers suggested forming a committee to deal with the topic. Mr. Wiles expressed interest in that idea, and suggested concentrating on figuring out what the issues are, possible solutions, and gauging public sentiment regarding the issue. Questions were raised as far as timing, the role the Board of Supervisors will play, and what role the tree commission will play. Board decisions will likely occur in October, and things will follow from there as far as staff directives for action on this. Wally Sansone of the Franklin Area Citizens Association spoke briefly about the situation, which is frequently occurring in his neighborhood. He described a situation where deviations were given to 2 lots without UFMD seeing the plans at all.

### **Minutes**

The July minutes were reviewed and approved by the commission.

### **Presentation: Tree Preservation and Planting Fund by Keith Cline**

The Tree Preservation and Planting Fund has been around for at least 10 years, funded through contributions largely through proffers, deviation requests, or other mechanisms-but has not been used. Balance of approximately \$70,000 is available through a specific disbursement procedure for acquiring funds, must be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Outside groups can request this money as well. Mr. Cline suggested a proposal to use the funds over the next three years, collaborating with partners to concentrate on schools as planting locations. Such a proposal would satisfy many aspects of the Tree Action Plan and the Boards Environmental agenda. Any proposal should be reviewed by the Tree Commission, so a draft is the next step.

### **UFMD Report**

Director Cline deferred to his discussion of the Tree Preservation and Planting Fund in the interest of time.

### **Commissioner Reports**

- Commissioner Peters mentioned that the “What is a healthy Forest?” (held the night before)presentation was a great event. He proposed inviting Joe Marx to speak to the Tree Commission.
- Commissioner Quigley added that the presentation was fascinating, endorsed the idea of having him speak, but given the dense nature of the presentation 2 hours would likely be necessary to properly digest the topic.
- Commissioner Allen reported that Plant Clinics would be closed as of the end of September, with almost 500 samples of diseases and other problems. 150 were trees, (approx. 25%) comprised largely of arborvitae, beech, cypress, dogwood, maple, oak, holly, and roses. The majority of problems were powdery mildew, canker, anthracnose, leaf spot, gall, scale, and mites. She requested feedback on potential fall Tree Forums. She will send out a reminder at the beginning of December for input on Tree Forums to be held in Spring.

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- Commissioner Momcilovic expressed support from his District's Supervisor for holding a Tree Forum, but there are potential conflicts with meeting space. A solution might be 2 events in a smaller space.
- Commissioner Kadet suggested trying to connect with realtors to offer brochures or other print resources to be given to new homeowners giving information about proper tree care. She will be pursuing this in Braddock District. Director Cline said that UFMD has information available, as do ISA and USFS. This information could be compiled into a "Tree Owners Manual". She later mentioned a Washington Post article about "forest bathing" as it relates to mental health and improving mental conditions.
- Commissioner Quigley went on a pollinator walk led by Dr. Ed Barrows, entomologist at Georgetown University. She also described visiting coastal redwoods recently along the coast of California and Washington.
- Commissioner Loughry will be retiring in January 2016, after 31 years of service.
- Commissioner Ayers expressed support for Director Cline's proposal in utilizing funds from the Tree Preservation and Planting Fund, and asked for a digital copy of the presentation given by Ms. Saums.
- Chairman Vickers reported on an effort to re-measure "big trees" in Virginia, with which he has been assisting. The new state champion silver maple is in Riverbend Park. Part 2 of John Stokely's talk will occur at the next meeting. He is hopeful that tours will be possible for the Tree Preservation Awards, if nominations are completed in time. Director Cline cautioned that there are a limited number of possible nominations this year. Electronic copies of the nomination form were requested. Annual elections for chairman and vice chairman will be held in December, the nominating committee will be staffed by Chet McLaren and Eleanor Quigley.

### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.