

Fairfax County Tree Commission  
Electronic Meeting Format Minutes  
Thursday, February 2, 2023

Toll Free Call in 1 888-270-9936: Participant Access Code 224765

**Call to Order:**

Chair Speas called the February 2, 2023 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (Tree Commission) to order at 7:02 p.m. via Electronic Meeting.

Chair Speas read the electronic meeting requirements to determine the following: a quorum is present, that all members' voices are audible to each other, that there is a need to conduct Tree Commission business electronically because of the county emergency orders for Covid-19, that the public has been notified of how to access the meeting, and that matters on the agenda are necessary to the discharge of the Fairfax County Tree Commission's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. All motions required by the Tree Commission Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings were made and passed unanimously.

Cory Suter abstained from the motion that all members voices were audible as he joined the meeting towards the end of the roll call.

**Roll Call:**

Present:	Cindy Speas, Chair	At-Large
	Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair	Mt. Vernon District
	Jeanne Kadet	Braddock District
	Bob Vickers	Dranesville District
	Bret Leslie	Hunter Mill District
	Kevin Holland	Mason District
	Cory Suter	Springfield District**
	Perry Rhodes	Sully District
	Rick Healy	EQAC
	John Burke	FCPA
	Jerry Peters	NVSWCD**
	Jim McGlone	VA Department of Forestry
Absent:	Jessica Bowser	Franconia District
	Brenda Frank	VA Cooperative Extension
Vacant:		Providence District

\*\* Indicates joined late/audio could not be verified

Chair Speas called a quorum and began the meeting by recognizing attending staff: Brian Keightley, Director Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD); Fairfax, VA, Matt Hansen, Land Development Services, Site Development Branch, Maria Harwood, UFMD; Great Falls, VA, Leslie Johnson, Zoning Administrator (joined later for the Parking Reimagined discussion).

**Business Meeting commenced immediately thereafter.**

**Public Comment Period:**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**Approval of the January 5, 2023 Minutes:**

Vice-Chair Kolish noted the footer on the minutes had a typo that incorrectly stated the year.

*Commissioner Vickers moved the adoption of the January 5, 2023 minutes as revised.*

*Commissioner Holland seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor, no abstentions.*

**Tree Commission 50th Anniversary Celebration Discussion:**

August 2023 officially marks the beginning of the Tree Commission's 50th anniversary. Chairman McKay (in a meeting with Chair Speas) and Supervisor Storck (in a meeting with Vice-Chair Kolish) have both indicated that they support the Board of Supervisors (BOS) recognizing this anniversary at a BOS meeting. The BOS is in recess during August, so the Commissioners discussed the merits of launching the anniversary in July versus August. Starting in July would not, however, preclude more events in August and later. For example, the Friends of Trees (FOT) awards could be combined with an anniversary celebration in September and could include past FOT winners too. If we lean the event towards educational awareness there could be a little bit of money to support the event. Chair Speas and Commissioner Kadet plan to do an after-action assessment of the recent FOT awards, which could guide our thinking about this year's event. Commissioner Vickers has started on a history of the Tree Commission with highlights from the last 10 years, which hopefully can be expanded to prior years too. It also could be an attachment to the Annual Report. It was noted that Sharon Bulova started her political career in Fairfax County on the Tree Commission and that including an interview with her for the history would be appropriate. Similarly, an interview with now Congressman Connolly, who appeared before the Tree Commission when he was BOS Chairman, and challenged the Tree Commission to do a Tree Action Plan, would be merited.

The commissioners also discussed updating the Tree Commission's Tree Basics Booklet (last updated in July 2019) for the anniversary and for upcoming events. Commissioner Peters noted that the booklet should advise against planting trees in turf and instead into a mulched area that extends to the tree's drip line with ground cover for the health of the tree and the insects it would support. On the other hand, the current one is still good and could be updated with a new cover.

Chair Speas noted that Chairman McKay suggested we provide content on the upcoming anniversary and trees monthly for BOS members' biweekly newsletters. Coordinating with Plant NOVA Natives regular inserts for many of these newsletters was also discussed.

**Administrative Matter of Responsibility for Minutes:**

The January 5, 2023 minutes reflected a change in format to simplify and shorten the preparation of minutes, and it met with the commissioners' approval. The Chair proposed that we add a new

position of Secretary to the Tree Commission or rotate the taking of minutes among the 16 commissioners (when fully staffed), the way that EQAC does. Chair Speas said that as Chair she would review draft minutes prepared by commissioners and revise as needed. This was viewed as appropriate and helpful.

***Commissioner Vickers moved that the minute taking responsibility be rotated among commissioners; seconded by Commissioner Burke. The motion passed.***

Vice-Chair Kolish offered to prepare a SignUpGenius so the commissioners could sign up for the month they want.

### **March 8th Community of Practice Meeting (CoP):**

The invitations for the meeting have been sent out. This will be a public, non-business meeting of the Tree Commission. Currently, Chair Speas and Commissioner Leslie serve as the Tree Commission representatives to the CoP's six-member Steering Committee. It was intended for people to rotate in and out. Both offered to step down if others on the Tree Commission wished to join the Steering Committee. There were no volunteers, so for now they will continue serving.

### **Programming Suggestions for 2023 Meetings:**

The Chair outlined upcoming programs and asked for suggestions for June, July, November and December during the meeting or by email.

### **Parking Reimagined:**

The Chair reported that EQAC has sent a letter to the BOS critical of the staff's proposal that would reduce parking spots. Less parking means less impervious surfaces. But the staff proposal did not include tree planting requirements and said that that issue could be dealt with on a separate screening/landscaping track. Also, the current proposal gives the Land Development Services Director discretion to reduce parking by 60% without additional public comment, which was of concern. Nature Forward has more info on this topic that it has sent to LDS and the BOS. The Chair said she would make it available to anyone who requested it. One commissioner strongly felt that this topic was in our purview to address and that he did not necessarily share EQAC's position. He felt it was going in the right direction and wanted to hear more from the staff. It also was noted that the Landscaping/Screening requirements have not been updated since 1978.

The staff is going back to the BOS with a white paper and a presentation to the Planning Commission. Ultimately the commissioners asked for a presentation on this from the staff, and based on that, the Tree Commission can have a full discussion and then consider whether to write its own letter or memo to the BOS on Parking Reimagined.

### **Earth Day and Environmental Expo:**

Commissioner Kadet announced that the county would celebrate Earth Day on April 22 from 10-4 at Sully Plantation. She and other commissioners can do tabling there to hand out the Tree

Basics Booklet, children's materials and other material. The UFMD staff will be supporting the commission's presence at this event. Supervisor Storck also will be hosting his annual Environmental Expo the same day, but UFMD doesn't have the resources to do both. Vice-Chair Kolish said that she would like to have a table at Supervisor Storck's event or share one with another organization. There will be a BOS proclamation that is split between Earth Day (more general) and Arbor Day (April 24) (in order to cover Tree City USA requirements) at Mantua Elementary School from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Commissioner McGlone said he believes he will be able to supply hardwood seedlings to hand out, but they will have to be wrapped and bagged.

**Commissioner Announcements:**

- Commissioner Rhodes reported that he received a request to speak before two cub scout dens and a Boy Scout troop in the Centreville area, Sully District. He spoke about the value of trees and how the scouts could become Tree Rescuers.

**UFMD Director's Update — Director Brian Keightley:**

He reported:

- That the BOS has its Emergency Order on its February 7 meeting agenda and is expected to rescind it, meaning the Tree Commission will be moving to in-person meetings in March (with the allowances for two virtual meetings a year, etc. that he previously reported on). He is arranging for security for the meetings.
- On the status of his vacancies and postings.
- That the Environmental Excellence (EQAC) and Friends of Trees awards would be celebrated in person by the BOS on March 28 at 6 p.m.
- That the event at Mantua Elementary School will be posted as a non-business meeting of the Tree Commission so all the commissioners are free to attend.

**Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.**