Fairfax County Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes – Thursday April 4, 2024

Call to Order:

Chair Speas called the April 4, 2024 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (TC) to order at 6:48 pm.

Chair Speas reviewed the rules on remote attendance and requirements for a quorum. She then called the roll:

Name	District/Agency	Attendance
Cindy Speas, Chair	At-Large	Present
Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair	Mount Vernon District	Present calling in from Mt. Vernon
Jeanne Kadet	Braddock District	Absent
Barbara Ryan	Dranesville District	Present
Glenna Tinney	Franconia District	Present
Bret Leslie	Hunter Mill District	Present
Kevin Holland	Mason District	Present
Rose Hendricks	Providence District	Present calling in from Falls Church
Cory Suter	Springfield District	Present
Perry Rhodes	Sully District	Present
Rick Healy	EQAC	Present
John Burke	FCPA	Present
Jerry Peters	NVSWCD	Present
Vacant	VA Coop Extension	N/A
Jacob Zielinski	VDOF	Present

Commissioner Peters moved that all absences had been properly notified and recorded, and that those on Zoom can be heard clearly. Commissioner Ryan seconded the motion. The motion was carried with all in favor, no abstentions.

Chair Speas announced that Brenda Frank, former TC representative for Virginia Cooperative Extension, has resigned.

Chair Speas welcomed staff to the meeting:

- Patricia Greenberg, Urban Forester III, Urban Forest Management Division

Public Comment Period:

Chair Speas asked for members of the public to identify themselves and if they wish to address the Commission. No members of the public were present.

Approval of the March 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

Chair Speas called for any corrections to the draft minutes for March 7, 2024. Suggested edits were shared on the screen for review. Chair Speas then called for a motion to approve as

amended.

Commissioner Ryan moved to adopt the March 7, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Leslie seconded the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Old Business:

- FOIA Update: Patricia Greenberg, Brian Keightley, Vice-Chair Kolish, and Chair Speas met with Lou Nuzzo from the Fairfax County Attorney's Office with questions about the FOIA implications of establishing committees. They were told that if the TC believes a topic needs work done by more than one person, that group will be considered a committee. Any committee is immediately subject to all FOIA requirements. Therefore, Mr. Nuzzo recommended that no fewer than 4 committee members be named, with the Chair and Vice-Chair serving on every committee. Committees must have a quorum to do business. For a four-person committee, attendance of 3 or more constitutes a "meeting." If only one or two members are present, the conversation does not constitute a meeting because there is no quorum. A discussion with two members of a group does not need to be noticed, and therefore minutes do not need to be taken. The Chair and Vice-Chair will offer a time from 6:00-6:45pm on meeting nights for those committees who wish to meet in person. The following committees have been established: Annual Report, Bylaws, Data Analysis, Event Support, Logo & other Designed materials, Outreach Materials, Tree Basics Update.
- Commissioner Rhodes revisited a prior conversation about the role that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) plays in tree-related decisions around development projects. He did some independent exploration of this issue to learn that VDOT contracts out much of the relevant work, and that they have guidelines they follow, which do not deal significantly with trees, except to note particular instances in which they must be removed. The chair indicated that the TC liaison, Patricia Greenberg, is actively working to make contact with the appropriate person at VDOT who could be invited to speak at an upcoming meeting on three matters.

New Business:

- **Budget Letter to the Board of Supervisors:** Prior to the meeting, commissioners received a draft letter to the BOS regarding the FY2025 Budget and 3rd Quarter FY2024 Budget Review. During the meeting, Chair Speas shared a new version of the letter that incorporated feedback she had received after circulating the initial draft. The TC reviewed the suggested edits and discussed additional revisions, with extensive conversation on how to represent the TC's position on the county's previous proposal to consolidate the animal care and control functions under the Department of Animal Shelters (DAS), and the more recent decision to leave the Deer Management Program under County Police supervision.

  Commissioner Ryan moved to accept the letter as amended. Commissioner Leslie seconded. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Commissioner Burke).

- **Logo development:** Commissioners Rhodes and Suter shared several logo concepts, including logos that have been used for TC materials in the past. Commissioners provided feedback. The consensus was that the TC would like to move forward with a modified version of Concept 5. The revised version should have more color and should not have a line around the circumference of the circle. The text: "Protect and Expand Our Urban Forests" should be printed along the bottom edge (and "Fairfax County Tree Commission" should remain along the top, as in the concept). In addition, the TC would like to see modifications to the tree graphic at the center because the sides are cut off the existing graphic. In addition, the TC would like to see some lateral roots attached to the tree, as those are essential but often overlooked tree components.

- **Development of outreach materials**: Commissioners Hendricks and Holland have begun building out a template slide deck, leveraging an initial draft shared by Chair Speas, and a set of responses to FAQs for commissioners to use when doing outreach.

- **Recommendations of Tysons Forest Community Task Force:** Commissioner Leslie provided a summary of lessons learned from participation in the task force that the TC might be able to apply going forward. First, two different stream restorations in the forest, in which more trees were ultimately saved than had initially been projected, suggest that the TC may benefit from a presentation by DPWES on their stream restoration efforts to inform a potential policy recommendation (or commendation in the annual report).

  In addition, redevelopment of properties located in resource protection areas may be another area worth review by the TC to determine whether there is something we can recommend to protect, improve, and expand the urban forest during redevelopment.

  Commissioner Leslie reflected that the place-based task force seemed to work because all stakeholders (e.g., residents, businesses, county staff) were at the table, it allowed the task force to address real-time challenges, and the residents and businesses continue to live with the challenges and successes.

  Action items fall under the following categories: Deliver a promise of coexistence, replenish the canopy, revive an old woodland trail, expand the forest's footprint, maintain a safe and clean forest, and create green champions to lead us for generations.

Announcements from UFMD liaison Patricia Greenberg:

- Patricia Greenberg gave an overview of upcoming outreach events: Riverbend Bluebell Festival (Commissioner Ryan), Providence District Earth Day (Commissioners Hendricks and Speas), and Fairfax County Earth Day at Sully Historic Site (Commissioners Rhodes, Leslie, Speas, Ryan, Kadet and Hendricks). The Tri-Fold display has been located and will be sent to Sully for the TC table.

- There is momentum in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services on

strategies for outreach and equitable engagement, including doing more work in underserved communities. There is no concrete approach yet, but there have been conversations with Director Herrington.

- There will be an upcoming ceremonial planting of 12 trees funded by TPPF, with the Bailey's Community Center where hopefully members of the Boys and Girls clubs will join in. Date is TBD, early May. Chair Speas recommended Patricia alert Jo Doumbia and Whitney Redding.

Commissioner Announcements:

- Commissioner Leslie asked when the tree survey data will be released.
- Commissioner Burke shared that the first round of bamboo removal locations have been selected. They will be primarily in staffed parks such as Lake Accotink, Green Spring Gardens and Huntley Meadows. Stream edge infestations are being deprioritized since removal of the monoculture would be extremely damaging to stormwater runoff and will be deferred to full stream restoration projects.
- Commissioner Ryan will speak at an early June Great Falls Citizens Association meeting as part of a Tree Talk. Also recently tabled at the McLean Community Association's SpringFest (and also will soon table at Riverbend Bluebell Festival)
- Commissioner Rhodes encouraged other commissioners to let their supervisors know when a TPPF planting will occur in their district. He also noted that he's on a task force advising on Centerville comprehensive plan changes and in a survey to local citizens, the 3rd most common word used was TREES.
- Commissioner Peters: 200 year old oak must be removed from the Grange. VDOT will cut into chunks to give to local residents who can transport in order to make live edge furniture. Spearheading an IMA workgroup at the Grange's Oak Grove.
- Chair Speas shared that the World Resources Institute just released data on global deforestation. Between 2001-2023 the U.S. was #5 country in the world with most tree cover loss: losing 47.9 million hectares of forest. https://research.wri.org/gfr/latest-analysis-deforestation-trends
- Commissioner Zielinski noted that he is working on projects dealing with the threats of Hemlock Wooly Adelgid and Emerald Ash Borer. Anyone interested in the Warden Tree project can contact him directly.
- Commissioner Suter noted the increased problem of deer browse on his farm in the Springfield district.
- Vice-Chair Kolish was invited by the new School Board member Mateo Dunn to have a conversation about trees on school properties. The conversation hasn't yet taken place.

Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.