

## **TREE COMMISSION MINUTES**

**June 16, 2016**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Vickers, Chair, Dranesville District  
Chet McLaren, Member At-Large  
Jeanne Kadet, Braddock District  
Eleanor Quigley, Mt. Vernon District  
Karen Campblin, Sully District  
Sheila Allen, VA Cooperative Extension  
Dragan Momcilovic, Hunter Mill District  
Rick Ayers, Providence District  
Jerry Peters, NV Soil & Water Conservation District

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim McGlone, Vice Chair, VA Dept. of Forestry  
Rick Healy, Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)  
Jessica Bowser, Lee District

**VACANT POSITIONS:** Springfield District  
Mason District  
Fairfax County Park Authority

**STAFF PRESENT:** Keith Cline, Director, UFMD  
Ian Fuze, Urban Forester II, UFMD  
Hugh Whitehead, Urban Forester III, UFMD  
Scott Diffenderfer, Urban Forester II, FCPA

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Vickers called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

### **Minutes**

The May 19, 2016 minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve by Chairman Vickers, seconded by Commissioner Quigley, unanimously approved.

### **Presentation by Keith Cline – A Brief Discussion of the New Proffer Law**

Director Cline briefly explained the Virginia General Assembly's new legislation that will take effect on July 1, 2016, which will severely restrict the County's ability to negotiate or suggest proffer language on developments with a residential component. County staff will only be able to address on-site impacts regarding such applications. He was not able to speak to the County's interpretation of the new legislation but sparked some discussion regarding the ambiguity of 'unreasonable' impacts and the potential effects on zoning review by Urban Forestry staff.

### **Presentation by Keith Cline - The Board's Environmental Agenda Update**

Director Cline presented the Board's updated environmental vision agenda and suggested that Commissioners make suggestions to the vision by submitting their input directly or attending one of the public hearings provided in the agenda. Commissioner Vickers discussed the importance of multijurisdictional integration through the development process.

### **Urban Forest Strategic Plan Update**

Hugh Whitehead presented updates to Urban Forestry Tree Action Plan specifically the policy regarding the Tree Preservation and Planting Fund and reported he is working to create partnerships

with other agencies who are viewed as stakeholders such as NVBIA, SWPD, BDCD, UDCD, and FCPA in order to obtain compliance with the Tree Conservation Ordinance as well as the Urban Forest Strategic Plan. Discussion followed highlighting the importance of Vice Chair McGlone's involvement as the cause for a flexible date to be determined. Chairman Vickers discussed the integration of designated tree data with champion big trees currently found in Fairfax County's GIS database and mentioned an additional paper copy database of significant trees found on FCPA property.

### **Tree Forums**

Commissioner Quigley informed the commission of a Tree Forum in Mount Vernon scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm in the auditorium at Walter Whitman Middle School. It is titled "Keeping Trees Healthy and Canopy Strong," and will be targeting homeowners to make them aware of the value, health, and economics of trees. Some discussion followed regarding the overall success of recent tree forums in Great Falls and Mclean.

### **UFMD Report**

Director Cline discussed the Specimen Tree designation policy and its use in determining eligibility status regarding trees along the periphery of the Brook's property. He explained that Urban Forestry staff required an interpretation from the County attorney's office determining the requirement of a conservation easement over the entire critical root zone of the nominated tree and whether the absence of such an easement would preclude the designation. Commissioner Peters inquired if such a policy would inhibit the designation of trees in the future. Discussion followed regarding the nature of easements, the 'taking' of land by a jurisdiction and the relevance to tree preservation.

Director Cline announced the departure of Urban Forester II Samantha Wangsgard following her promotion to a FCPA position and his intent to fill her position as well as advertise for two additional positions. The creation of two additional Urban Forester II positions is a direct result of the infill lot development issues. The new positions will allow Urban Forestry staff to review additional infill lot plans.

Director Cline cautioned that none of his brief summary nor the subsequent discussion of the new proffer amendment should be taken as an interpretation by Fairfax County of the new law.

### **Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Quigley discussed an article regarding the use of parasitoid wasps to control emerald ash borer in Iowa.

Commissioner Peters inquired if Urban Forestry staff had any involvement with the emerald ash borer parasitoid wasp surveys. Director Cline clarified Urban Forestry staff had been working with Smithsonian earlier in the spring on the surveys within Fairfax County. Discussion followed regarding emerald ash borer specifically that Virginia is endemic and ash firewood may be transported throughout state but not out of the state.

Commissioner Ayers noted the absence of a Springfield district Commissioner and suggested that he take on the role of Commissioner of that supervisory district.

Commissioner Campblin thanked Commissioners Vickers and Allen for their work participating and organizing the public tree forums. She is preparing a forum for Sully but no date has been set. She mentioned a recent training session with Urban Forestry staff educating her on the Tree Conservation Ordinance

Commissioner Momcilovic discussed his participation at the Westbrook Trail project public hearing. The project is to begin next year and will have minimal tree impacts.

Commissioner Vickers discussed the success of the Friends of Trees ceremony he attended earlier in the day. He reported he recently attended a meeting in Dranesville regarding VDOT's intention to install deceleration lanes along Georgetown Pike and most recently Springvale Road. The projects have been halted due to the resident's consternation to proposed tree loss referring to the designation status of Georgetown Pike as a state scenic highway.

Scott Diffenderfer explained the responsibilities of his new position and shared his professional background. He is supervising FCPA's tree crew and overall tree management on Park Authority property specifically dealing with hazardous tree complaints.

Commissioner Allen discussed current pest and disease trends during the spring of 2016 discovered through her work with the Virginia Cooperative Extension office.

Commissioner Kadet discussed the Old Burke Lake Preserve development and the noticeable tree loss there including her cooperation with an investigative journalist reporting on the project.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.