

Fairfax County Tree Commission
Approved Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 5, 2023

Call to Order:

Chair Speas called the October 5, 2023 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (Tree Commission) to order at 7:00 PM.

Chair Speas welcomed all attendees and began the roll call:

Name	District/Agency	Attendance
Cindy Speas, Chair	At-Large	Present
Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair	Mt. Vernon District	Present
Jeanne Kadet	Braddock District	Absent
Barbara Ryan	Dranesville District	Present
Jessica Bowser	Franconia District	Absent
Bret Leslie	Hunter Mill District	Absent
Kevin Holland	Mason District	Present
Rose Hendricks	Providence District	Remote, On Zoom
Cory Suter	Springfield District	Remote, On Zoom
Perry Rhodes	Sully District	Present
Rick Healy	EQAC	Present
John Burke	FCPA	Remote, On Zoom
Jerry Peters	NVSWCD	Present
Brenda Frank	VA Coop Extension VDOF	Present Vacant

Chair Speas reviewed the rules on remote attendance and requirements for a quorum.

Commissioner Peters moved to pass a quorum which was seconded by Commissioner Ryan. The motion was carried with all in flavor, no abstentions.

Chair Speas began the meeting by recognizing **attending staff**:

Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division
Patricia Greenberg, Community and Urban Forester

Public Comment Period:

Chair Speas asked for members of the public to identify themselves and if they wish to address the Commission. There were no members of the public in attendance.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Chair Speas called for any corrections to the draft minutes for September 7, 2023. She then called for a motion to approve as amended.

Commissioner Holland moved to adopt the September 7, 2023 minutes as amended. Commissioner Ryan seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor, no abstentions.

Review and approval of the Tree Commission September 20, 2023 Community of Practice (COP) Minutes was tabled until next meeting.

Old Business:

- The Presenter for the scheduled discussion on FOIA requirements for BAC members had a conflict and the discussion will be rescheduled for next month.
- Chair Speas provided an update on the upcoming TC Charter revisions:
 - Letters of support were received from NVSWCD and EQAC;
 - An LDS staff report on September 26, 2023 was in favor of the revisions with one minor comment about the expected frequency of comments to various organization;
 - The Planning Commission will review the charter revisions on October 25, 2023;
 - The public hearing at the BOS is scheduled for December 5, 2023;
 - John Friedman of LDS will be presenting the revisions at the Planning Commission;
 - Commissioners should be informing their supervisors of the revisions and schedule.
- Chair Speas noted that the TC's suggested legislative items were discussed by the BOS on October 3, 2023 at its Legislative Committee. While they supported the ideas, none were specifically included in the Legislative Package. Comment was made that studies are great but they don't work. The BOS agreed its representatives should monitor what is going on in Richmond on trees and report back to the BOS for consideration in real time next January.

New Business:

- Chair Speas called for final comments and approval of the 2023 TC Annual Report. ***Commissioner Frank moved to approve the 2023 Annual Report as amended. Commissioner Healy seconded the motion.*** During discussion, Commissioner Peters noted he had a few additions describing some recent projects, but nothing changing content. ***Motion was approved with all in favor, no abstentions.***
- Chair Speas presented a draft letter to the BOS from the TC on the environmental impacts of Data Centers, and asked the TC to review and discuss. ***Commissioner Kolish made a motion to approve. Commissioner Ryan seconded the motion.*** Commissioner Ryan presented a summary of the letter and background, focusing on environmental factors and trees impacted by data centers. Comments on the letter contents were discussed and a revised letter was presented that addressed voiced concerns. A final revision was proposed to change the recipients of the letter. The motion was amended as proposed by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Healy. ***Motion for the revised letter was approved with all in***

favor, no abstentions.

- Chair Speas asked that the Tree Commissioners review our letter on landscaping screening as it is going to the Planning Commission on December 6, 2023.

UFMD Director's Update — Director Brian Keightley:

- Director Keightley tentatively proposed a TC retreat for Tree Commissioners and UFMD (a facilitated meeting in early 2024).
- Director Keighley asked if the TC wanted to adjust our meeting schedule for 2024, recommending a consistent date and time.
- As noted at the COP meeting, Fairfax County was not selected for an Urban and Community Forestry Grant. No counties in VA or neighboring states received grants. Some independent cities in VA did receive grants, including Fairfax City.
- Director Keighley provided the latest tree canopy data from the Chesapeake Bay Program (Fairfax County had 55.4% tree cover in 2018). Results are similar to Casey Trees/Plant Geo 2021 data. Director Keighley is preparing a report on the data analyses. Commissioner Peters noted that 39.9 % of tree canopy is over lawns and these should be considered separately. He suggested that Fairfax County should promote not growing grass under trees.
- Director Keightley briefly discussed the Tree Equity Score Analyzer and tree planting for fall 2023.

Commissioner Announcements:

- Commissioner Frank noted that Commissioner Kadet took the Tree Basics books to a local farmers market where they will distribute them to interested attendees. She noted that they plan to continue this practice.
- Commissioner Peters noted the well-deserved recognition that former-Commissioner McGlone received upon his retirement from the Fairfax Master Naturalists.

Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 8:58 PM.