

**Fairfax County Tree Commission  
DRAFT Meeting Minutes – Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)  
Thursday, January 4, 2024**

**Call to Order:**

Chair Speas called the January 4, 2024 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (TC) to order at 6:47pm.

Chair Speas welcomed all attendees and began the roll call:

| <b>Name</b>               | <b>District/Agency</b> | <b>Calling in from</b> | <b>Attendance</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Cindy Speas, Chair        | At-Large               | Falls Church           | Present           |
| Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair | Mount Vernon District  | Mount Vernon           | Present           |
| Jeanne Kadet              | Braddock District      | Annandale              | Present           |
| Barbara Ryan              | Dranesville District   | McLean                 | Present           |
| Jessica Bowser            | Franconia District     |                        | Absent            |
| Bret Leslie               | Hunter Mill District   | Mount Laurel, NJ       | Present           |
| Kevin Holland             | Mason District         | joined after roll call | Present           |
| Rose Hendricks            | Providence District    | Falls Church           | Present           |
| Cory Suter                | Springfield District   |                        | Present           |
| Perry Rhodes              | Sully District         | Centreville            | Present           |
| Rick Healy                | EQAC                   | Annandale              | Present           |
| John Burke                | FCPA                   | Arlington              | Present           |
| Jerry Peters              | NVSWCD                 | Great Falls            | Present           |
| Brenda Frank              | VA Coop Extension      | McLean                 | Present           |
| Vacant                    | VDOF                   |                        | Vacant            |

Chair Speas called a quorum, and passed the virtual gavel to Vice-Chair Kolish.

***Chair Speas moved that everyone’s voice could be heard by each other member of the TC. Commissioner Peters seconded. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.***

***Chair Speas moved that per FOIA requirements, the TC may conduct this meeting virtually and the public can access the meeting. Commissioner Leslie seconded. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.***

Chair Speas welcomed staff to the meeting:

- Joan Allen, 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. Each person has three minutes to speak. Kristin Gorak was present and

indicated that she and her son intended to listen to the meeting for a boy scout project and did not ask to speak. The Public Comment period was bypassed.

**Approval of the Thursday, December 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes:**

Chair Speas called for any corrections to the draft minutes for December 7, 2023. Suggested edits were shared on the screen for review. Chair Speas then called for a motion to approve as amended.

***Commissioner Leslie moved to adopt the December 7, 2023 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Kolish seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention, Commissioner Suter, who was not in attendance at the December meeting.***

**Old Business:**

- Chair Speas introduced discussion on the 2024 Tree Commission meeting schedule, which has been posted on the website and is copied below. Chair Speas indicated that the schedule could change.

2024 Tree Commission Meeting Schedule

- January 4, 2024\*
- January 25, 2024
- March 7, 2024
- April 4, 2024
- May 2, 2024
- June 13, 2024
- July 11, 2024\*
- August - No Meeting
- September 5, 2024
- September 26, 2024\*
- November 14, 2024
- December 12, 2024
- January 9, 2025

\*Virtual Meeting on Zoom

- **2023 Report from FCPA's Natural Resources Division:** Commissioner Burke presented the 2023 Report from FCPA's Natural Resources division, discussing activities and priorities of the division's tenets, which are Inventory and Planning, Protecting Natural Capital, Managing Wild Populations and Restoring Ecosystems, Fostering Stewardship and Expanding Natural Capital, and Supporting FCPA Investment in Natural Capital. As part of his presentation, Commissioner Burke provided an update on the work FCPA is conducting to address bamboo in the parks and the need for continued funding to continue that work as well as anticipated FY 2024 priorities. Questions focused on rare

species identification, inventorying of invasive plant species, and specific aspects of the bamboo removal program. Chair Speas asked that Commissioner Burke let members of the Tree Commission know what they can do to support FCPA funding in the coming FCPA budget cycle. NOTE: If anyone wishes a copy of the presentation, please contact [treecommission@fairfaxcounty.com](mailto:treecommission@fairfaxcounty.com) to request a copy.

- **Tree Commission Officer Job Descriptions and Nominating Committee for Secretary:** Chair Speas introduced discussion of a proposed draft job description for the Tree Commission Secretary position. Chair Speas and Vice Chair Kolish discussed the rationale for the new position and the proposed responsibilities, which included some that had been moved from the duties performed by the Chair and Vice Chair. Chair Speas suggested that the Tree Commission vote on the new and amended position descriptions for all three officer positions at its March meeting. There was no objection. She asked for volunteers to serve as a Nomination Committee for the Secretary position, and Commissioner Leslie and Commissioner Ryan volunteered to serve on the committee.
- **2024 General Assembly Legislative Matters:** Chair Speas discussed the Board of Supervisor's (BOS) Legislative Package where the BOS seeks increased flexibility and authority for localities to enhance tree canopy. She asked commissioners how they felt about the Tree Commission taking an active role in monitoring tree-related legislative developments at the 2024 General Assembly and sharing information with the BOS as appropriate. Discussion followed regarding whether this would be consistent with the charter, the nature and method of accomplishing this goal, the nature of information that might be monitored and shared, and the role of the Tree Commission in regard to the legislative process during the General Assembly. No action was taken.
- **Upcoming Tree Commission Retreat and Community of Practice Gathering:** Chair Speas discussed the upcoming Tree Commission retreat, scheduled to take place on Thursday, January 25, 2024. Tree Commissioners should expect to receive emails and information related to the retreat in the coming weeks, and Chair Speas suggested that before the meeting, members review the Tree Action Plan, Annual Report, and revised Tree Commission charter. She also encouraged all to attend the Community of Practice Gathering scheduled to take place after the retreat at a nearby location.
- **Response to Presentation on Amendments to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance:** Chair Speas asked for feedback on whether the Tree Commission should provide a response to the Land Development Services (LDS) outreach presentation on amendments to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance that was delivered to the Tree Commission at its December meeting. LDS plans to initiate a formal public hearing process in late spring or summer of 2024, targeting an effective date in September 2024. Commissioner Ryan volunteered to conduct further research on the matters presented

and to report back at the March or April meeting on whether a response or letter may be warranted.

**New Business:**

- **DPWES-Tree Commission Support Memo:** Chair Speas reported that she plans to ask Dir. Herrington and Dir. Keightley for a review of the DPWES-Tree Commission Support memo of 11/22/22 with the goal of bringing it back to the Tree Commission for consideration by fall of 2024. She suggested that anyone interested in assisting with the review let her know.
- **UFMD Director's Update:** Dir. Keightley's planned Overview of 2024 Urban Forest Management Division was postponed due to his absence. Chair Speas reported that she has requested a presentation on the new LDS Forest Conservation organizational alignment for the Tree Commission's March meeting.

**Commissioner Announcements:**

- Commissioner Kadet announced that the 2024 Fairfax Earth Day event would be held on April 20, 2024 and asked that commissioners save the date and indicate their interest in assisting at a Tree Commission booth at the event. Several commissioners said they were interested in assisting, and Commissioner Kadet said she would follow up directly with them.
- Chair Speas reminded commissioners about 1) the upcoming Friends of Trees Award ceremony to be held at the Government Center on February 13, 2024 and 2) the opportunity to provide individual comments at the upcoming Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) Public Comment meeting on January 11, 2024. The deadline to sign up to provide comments is on January 5, 2024.
- Commissioner Leslie provided an update from the Tyson's Forest Community Task Force, which consists of tenants, business community, local residents, and local government representatives. He reported that the work of the Task Force is being driven by higher density development and development put in place prior to the establishment of Resource Protection Areas (RPAs). The Task Force is planning to complete its work in early February, and will prepare a report for Supervisor Alcorn.

**Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.**

**Addendum to Minutes: Presentation from FCPA's John Burke on Natural Resources 2023 Report.**