

Fairfax County Tree Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 7, 2024

Call to Order:

Chair Speas called the March 7, 2024 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (TC) to order at 6:47pm.

Chair Speas welcomed all attendees and began the roll call:

Name	District/Agency	Attendance
Cindy Speas, Chair	At-Large	Present
Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair	Mount Vernon District	Present
Jeanne Kadet	Braddock District	Present
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
Cory Suter	Springfield District	Present
Perry Rhodes	Sully District	Present
Rick Healy	EQAC	Present
John Burke	FCPA	Present
Jerry Peters	NVSWCD	Present
Brenda Frank	VA Coop Extension	Present
Jacob	VDOF	Present

Chair Speas determined that a quorum was present and began the meeting by welcoming attending staff:

- Patricia Greenberg, Urban and Community Forester and Liaison to the TC, Director of Urban Forest Management Division
- Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division
- Joan Allen, Forest Pest Branch Chief, Urban Forest Management Division (via Zoom)

Public Comment Period: Maryam Dadkhah from the Town of Vienna spoke about the proposed consolidation of animal care and control functions (currently under the Fairfax County Police Department and Department of Animal Shelters (DAS)) under DAS. Maryam and others are requesting that the members of the Board of Supervisors table the proposed consolidation because there is not a clear plan for the deer management program. The proposal does not seem to be based on an assessment or appropriate public consultation. The person overseeing the DAS previously worked for the Humane Society, which has come out against wildlife management.

There is a conflict of interest in managing the animal shelter (i.e., no-kill policy) and wildlife management (no-kill is inappropriate).

Welcome to New Members: Chair Speas invited new members Glenna Tinney, Franconia District, and Jacob Zielinski, Virginia Department of Forestry, to introduce themselves.

Approval of the January 4, 2024, January 25, 2024 (Retreat) and January 30, 2024 (Non-Business Meeting) Meeting Minutes:

Chair Speas called for any corrections to the draft minutes for the January 4, January 25, and January 30, 2024 meetings. There were no suggested amendments. Chair Speas then called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Vice-Chair Kolish moved to adopt the January 4, January 25, and January 30, 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Suter seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Old Business:

- Review of Secretary position, as required by the new TC Charter. During the discussion, Chair Speas affirmed that the Secretary is not necessarily responsible for Non-Business Meeting minutes. Those minutes will be provided by a member of the TC who was involved in the Non-Business Meeting. The position was updated to specify that the Secretary “or an authorized agent” will take minutes.

Description: The Secretary of the Tree Commission, or an authorized agent, will prepare draft minutes of all regular business meetings. That includes properly recording all motions and amendments, voting outcomes, and the official roll call of members. The Secretary will provide an ADA compliant Word document to the Chair for review and comment, prior to the Chair sending it to the staff liaison to post publicly at least three days prior to the next meeting. After the meeting, the Secretary shall provide an approved version of the minutes that includes all edits. This must be sent to the liaison for public posting within seven days after the meeting. The Secretary may offer other editorial and administrative assistance to the Chair.

Commissioner Leslie moved to accept the position description. Commissioner Ryan seconded. After discussion, the motion carried unanimously as amended with no abstentions.

- Election of Secretary: Chair Speas asked the nominating committee—Commissioners Leslie and Ryan—for a report of nominations based on their outreach to members of the TC. Three commissioners were nominated, two of whom declined the position. There were no nominations from the floor.

Per Roberts Rules of Order, a single nomination constitutes approval by acclamation. Commissioner Hendricks was congratulated on her election as the TC’s first secretary.

- Overview of UFMD by Director Brian Keightley: UFMD is under the Department of Public Fairfax County Tree Commission

Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and reports to the DPWES Deputy Director, Ellie Coddling. UFMD includes two branches: Forest Pest Management Branch under Joan Allen and Outreach and Special Projects under Todd Nelson. As of 2023 there was an administrative reorganization to UFMD, when the Conservation Branch was moved to Land Development Services. Dir. Keightley presented a history of UFMD and an overview of pest management and tree planting activities. Tree planting efforts are focused on heat island areas with low canopy in vulnerable areas of the community and planting in developed areas (e.g., parking lots and near buildings). UFMD also does a lot of inventory and monitoring as part of forest health initiatives. Dir. Keightley acknowledged that the name of UFMD may not make the division's work clear to members of the public, and it is exploring opportunities for rebranding.

- Update on changes to Chesapeake Bay Protection Ordinances: Commissioner Ryan held a follow up conversation with Jerry Stonefield (LDS) following his December 2023 presentation to the TC on amendments to the Chesapeake Bay Protection Ordinances. The state is requiring local governments to update their regulations in two areas: Mature trees within Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and climate resilience, accounting for sea-level rise. While Mr. Stonefield had indicated that Fairfax County regulations are largely aligned with the new state requirements, Commissioner Ryan noted some new elements in the regulations, and sought to determine whether Fairfax County regulations were being updated accordingly. In her follow-up conversation with Stonefield, he represented that he thought the county plans to adopt the new regulations “verbatim” (which, in Virginia, is the maximum extent possible per the Dillon Rule). The draft updated regulations will be available in April or May, and the Board of Supervisors is expected to vote on the language by September, as the law requires. The TC agreed to monitor the forthcoming regulations and consider writing a letter if appropriate.
- Update on Department of Planning and Development (DPD) January 9 Data Center Report. Commissioner Kolish provided an overview of the DPD report in relation to the TC's letter to DPD in October 2023. Her conclusion is that tree planting is mentioned, but not a significant component. The TC discussed that the report does not focus on ways to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from data centers. The TC discussed whether a letter to the BOS is warranted. Chair Speas will reach out to EQAC to discuss the possibility of a joint letter.

New Business:

- Establish new projects: Based on the conversation and interest at the TC retreat in January 2024, Chair Speas listed potential topics for commissioners to work on and passed around a sheet for commissioners to indicate interest.
- Update on Fairfax County Animal Services Consolidation Proposal and public outreach: Commissioner Peters shared an overview of the county's plan consolidate animal services. Under this consolidation model, animal protection laws would be enforced by Animal Control Officers (ACOs) who report to a chief ACO under the director of Director of Animal Sheltering (DAS). Commissioner Peters pointed out that the Director of DAS is a former

employee of the Humane Society, which is an animal rights organization. A group of advocates is speaking with Supervisors in opposition to this plan. Most recently, it was revealed that the Deer Management Program will not be moved to the DAS, but will remain in the Police Department, which decreases the relevance of this issue for the TC. Two town halls in March and the Supervisors' April budget hearings are open for public comment.

Commissioner Announcements:

Tree Preservation and Planting Fund Update: Commissioner Rhodes reported that the use of funds from the TPPF has been approved for three projects (Franklin Middle School, 7 trees; Clearview Elementary School, 24 trees; Lake Anne Elementary School, 20 trees) for a total of 51 trees. In addition, planting at Annandale Terrace began last fall and is continuing.

- Commissioner Kadet is holding a Tree Forum in the Braddock District on March 20. The event will have basic information about tree care for suburban communities. Jim McGlone, Margaret Fisher, and Patricia Greenberg will be speakers. There will also be a tree raffle with trees from Fairfax ReLeaf.
- Commissioner Frank shared that Virginia Extension Service will be working with UFMD on Beech Leaf Disease outreach this summer.
- Commissioner Burke noted that the FCPA position for Bamboo Manager has been approved. FCPA will be doing a webinar with Supervisor Lusk's office on bamboo.
- Commissioner Leslie shared that the Tysons Forest Community Task Force report will be published in the middle of March. It includes 24 recommendations.
- Vice-Chair Kolish tabled at Supervisor Storck's Town Hall in the Mt. Vernon District.
- Commissioner Suter would like to do something about trees cut down in his Springfield District off Pope's Head Road. There was follow up discussion on inviting a VDOT representative to a future meeting.
- Commissioner Hendricks shared that she and Chair Speas will be present at the Providence District Earth Day Celebration.
- Commissioner Holland shared that the Washington Post had an article on the non-native Tree of Heaven and how it helps the non-native invasive Spotted Lanternfly flourish.
- Commissioner Zielinski announced VDOF has the Warden tree program that provides free trees to taxpayers in Virginia. People may reach out to him for more information.
- Patricia Greenwood reviewed upcoming outreach opportunities in April and May.

Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.