

### Call to Order:

Chair Speas called the June meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. on June 16th, 2022, via Electronic Meeting format.

### From the Chair:

“First, to conduct this meeting wholly electronically and to effectuate both the emergency procedures authorized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, in compliance with Virginia FOIA, the Fairfax County Tree Commission must make certain findings and determinations for the record. So I ask you for your patience.”

### Audibility of Members’ Voices:

“Because each member of the Fairfax County Tree Commission is participating in this meeting from a separate location, we must verify that a quorum of members is participating, and that each member’s voice is clear, audible, and at an appropriate volume for all the other members. To do that, I am going to do a roll call, and ask each commission member participating tonight to state your name and the location from which you are participating. I ask that each of you pay close attention to ensure that you can hear each of your colleagues. Following this roll call, we will vote to establish that every member can hear every other member.”

### Motion to Hear:

“At this point, I will pass the virtual gavel to Commissioner Ledec, so that I may be heard to make the requisite motion.

I move that each member’s voice may be adequately heard by each other member of this the Fairfax County Tree Commission.”

***Commissioner Leslie seconded the motion, all in favor, no abstentions, motion carried.***

Chairman Speas noted there was not a quorum at the end of the roll call. However Bob Vickers, Dranesville District joined at making a quorum. The minutes will need to be officially approved at the July meeting.

**Roll Call:**

**PRESENT:**

Cindy Speas, Chair, At-Large, Falls Church, VA  
Bret Leslie, Hunter Mill District, Vienna, VA  
Cathy Ledec, Mt. Vernon District, Alexandria, VA  
Laura Beaty, Providence District, Fairfax, VA  
Cory Suter, Springfield District, Fairfax Station, VA  
Rick Healy, Environmental Quality Advisory Council, Chantilly, VA  
John Burke, Fairfax County Park Authority, Arlington, VA  
Robert Vickers, Dranesville District, Great Falls, VA (joined at 7:17 p.m., making a quorum. The business meeting officially commenced at 7:46 p.m.)

**ABSENT:**

Jim McGlone, Vice-Chair  
Jeanne Kadet, Braddock District, Annandale, VA  
Jessica Bowser, Lee District, Alexandria, VA  
Kevin Holland, Mason District, Falls Church, VA  
Karen Campblin, Sully District  
Jerry Peters, NV Soil & Water Conservation District, Great Falls, VA  
Brenda Frank, VA Cooperative Extension, Mclean, VA

**STAFF:**

Brian Keightley, Urban Forest Management Division  
Joe Hirz, new Urban Forester with UFMD  
Tiffany Gregory, Urban Forest Management Division  
Hugh Whitehead, Urban Forest Management Division (joined meeting in process)

**PUBLIC:**

Margaret Fisher, Plant Nova Natives

**Public Comment:**

None.

Chair Speas then asked Commissioners to suspend the posted agenda in order to have the Plant Nova Natives scheduled presentation first. Afterwards, the agenda would resume with the Approval of the Minutes. Chair Speas asked if there were any objections, and, hearing none, promptly started the presentation.

### Presentation by Margaret Fisher, Plant Nova Natives, On the Tree Rescuer Program

Chair Speas introduction: Plant NOVA Natives is one of nine regional campaigns in the Plant Virginia Natives partnership that was founded 10 years ago by representatives from governmental, non-profit and private environmental organizations, including the Virginia Department of Forestry. The PNN Steering Committee spent the first few years researching and creating the *Native Plants for Northern Virginia* guide. Margaret Fisher joined the Steering Committee 7-8 years ago, volunteering to direct PNN outreach efforts. She is an Audubon-at-Home Ambassador, Fairfax Master Naturalist, Fairfax Invasives Management Area site leader, and author of *Take Our Advice: A Handbook for Gardening in Northern Virginia*. Margaret will talk about the Plant Nova Trees Tree Rescuer program!

Ms. Fisher presentation summarized the program, volunteer efforts, results, logistics, what one can personally do, and what to ask the Board of Supervisors. We learned PNN is a joint social media effort of about 150 local organizations and businesses promoting native plants. Plant Nova Trees was established to promote planting native trees, supporting the Virginia state effort to plant 600,000 trees by 2025. PNT quickly realized that tree-planting goal paled in comparison to the tree loss from invasive vines and shifted to solving that problem as its main goal. By reaching new audiences in our neighborhoods (non-gardeners), PNT hopes to build the political will for the county to combat the invasive vine (and other invasive plant) problem. 229 volunteers signed up; they have estimated 23K at risk trees in 6.5 square miles, and dropped off brochures to alert homeowners. They have rescued about 3K trees. PNT has initiated conversations with VDOT about cutting vines on street trees. The Board of Supervisors could be instrumental in publicizing this issue, studying this problem and requesting achievable solutions to solve it. For more information and to volunteer to help this program with tabling, walking and counting in your neighborhood, doing exhibits at your local library, training to remove invasives, go to [PlantNovaTrees.org](http://PlantNovaTrees.org). Commissioner Ledec thanked PNN and PNT for its important work in our community, and called on the Tree

Commission to maintain a close relationship with the work of that group. One final note from Ms. Fisher: PNN is starting a network, where we have one person to be the liaison to a supervisor about trees, to give them articles about the tree campaign and also to let PNN know in return what the supervisors are doing about trees. If interested, contact her directly at 1Margaret.e.Fisher@gmail.com.

A Commissioner commented that PNT's neighborhood education program could be used with scouting groups working on badges. A staffer asked if PNN had considered partnering with lawn care companies and/or landscape design companies to educate them about providing invasive removal services. PNN is developing training material in both English and Spanish for that purpose. Another Commissioner asked about the use of vinegar instead of other herbicides. Both Ms. Fisher and John Burke reminded the group that vinegar is treated like an herbicidal chemical and requires similar training and following specific safety requirements. Chair Speas summarized that PNN efforts to identify and remove invasives is a critical piece of the Tree Action Plan, which urges the Community of Practice to save and protect the current urban forest.

#### NOTE:

A quorum was reached when Commissioner Vickers joined. Chair Speas asked Bob to speak so that everyone could hear him. Official business started at 7:46 pm.

#### Approval of the May 19, 2022 Minutes:

Chair Speas called for additions or edits to the April 21, 2022 minutes. After some discussion and agreement about having minutes that reflect any discussion,

***Commissioner Ledec moved to approve the May Minutes. Commissioner Suter seconded the motion, all in favor, no abstentions, motion carried.***

#### Reports:

##### Chair Speas: Letter to BOS on method of communication

Chair Speas thanked the Commissioners who made excellent editorial suggestions. Then she invited comments on the issue of whether now would be a good time to send this topic to the BOS. There was discussion about putting our energy and focus instead on the process of changing our charter and on writing the upcoming Annual Report. There was general agreement to table (but not forget) the communications letter and work instead on the charter changes that will more

closely align with the Tree Action Plan and might also include some mechanism for two-way responsive communications with the BOS. Commissioner Ledec noted that we should be aware that the topic of communication with BACs has been discussed at the BOS Environmental Committee, and perhaps the TC might like to follow up with Camilla Speer, Supervisor Storck's environmental aide.

#### Bret Leslie: Community of Practice Steering Committee meeting summary

The CoP Steering Committee has met twice (most recently on June 6). It has finalized a draft Charter to be approved by the Director of UFMD and the Chair of the Tree Commission. It agreed to meet monthly and has tentatively set September 28 for the fall meeting, subject to approvals.

#### New Business:

The TC discussed that prior years have seen changes in the meeting date and that it would be good to find a time that adapts to any conflicts. It was determined that a survey would be a good way to assess all member current needs. The Chair will send out a survey and share the results to discuss at the July meeting. It was suggested that staff should look to see if a good "in-person" room is available for the preferred dates/times in the survey to prepare for possible in-person meetings.

#### UFMD Director's Update – Brian Keightley

Tree Commission annual report review: Brian will send out Commissioner Franks' request to UFMD as an example of asking for data for the annual report. UFMD will respond as soon as it is able.

UFMD is working on the aerial imagery and iTree Survey project: which is currently in procurement. No promises, but may be ready to go by end of summer.

Friends of Trees nomination form now located online. Chair Speas asked all Commissioners to send info to Jeanne about community contacts to put on our Friends of Trees outreach list. The DPWES Public Information Office will announce every other week (including social media).

#### Commissioner Activities or Announcements:

Commissioner Burke: discussed prescribed burns update: the team attended the Wildland Fire Team weeklong training with many members achieving specific certifications. Also, Joan Allen from UFMD's Pest Management branch & FCPA's

Natural Resources branch collaborated to look for Beech Leaf Disease in Burke Lake Park. He also said his branch is seeking Restoration Ecologists to join the Landscape Legacy and Sustainability program.

Cathy Ledec remarks: “As most of you have heard during tonight's meeting, this is my last meeting. As a member of the Fairfax County Tree Commission, I want to just take a few minutes to share a few remarks. I just want to say that I've thoroughly enjoyed working with all of you, and that your work is truly an inspiration to me. Together we've really accomplished great things. But I want you to know that the work of the Tree Commission is really important, and it's really up to you to continue to work hard to educate others, including and especially the members of our Board of Supervisors, on why trees should be an important part of their decision making. I urge the Tree Commission to come up with a strategy to further educate the members of the Board of Supervisors on why trees matter, and that they should work to strengthen county policy as they directly impact and indirectly impact trees, which impact all of us. So I want to finally say thank you for your enthusiastic volunteerism and for standing up for our trees and the environment that supports them. I very much look forward to hearing about all of the great things that you will be doing in the future and, who knows, I may pipe up as a member of the general public, at a future meeting. I would look forward to doing that! So thanks to all of you, and I wish all of you the very best.”

Commissioner Suter: announced that Lambmowers.com serves as an invasive removal company across the northern Virginia area.

Chair Speas: presented Commissioner Ledec with a framed commendation for her work: “The Fairfax County Tree Commission gratefully commends Cathy Ledec for her inspiring leadership, knowledge, commitment, and courage working to preserve and expand Fairfax County's urban forest. October 2016 to June 2022.”

Adjournment: 8:37 p.m.