

Fairfax County Tree Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 1, 2023

Call to Order:

Chair Speas called the June 1, 2023 meeting of the Fairfax County Tree Commission (Tree Commission) to order at 6:47 p.m.

Chair Speas welcomed all attendees and began the roll call:

Present:	Cindy Speas, Chair	At-Large
	Elaine Kolish, Vice-Chair	Mt. Vernon District
	Jeanne Kadet	Braddock District
	Bob Vickers	Dranesville District
	Jessica Bowser	Franconia District
	Bret Leslie	Hunter Mill District
	Cory Suter	Springfield District
	Perry Rhodes	Sully District
	John Burke	FCPA
	Rick Healy	EQAC
	Jerry Peters	NVSWCD
	Brenda Frank	VA Cooperative Extension
	Jim McGlone	VA Department of Forestry
Absent:	Kevin Holland	Mason District
Vacant:		Providence District

Chair Speas determined that a quorum was present. She recognized attending county staff: **Sara Morgan**, Senior Planner, Zoning Administration Division, Department of Planning and Development (DPD); **Joan Allen**, Chief, Forest Pest Branch of Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD) and **Carmen Bishop**, Assistant Zoning Administrator for the Ordinance Administration Section in the Zoning Administration Division of DPD.

Public Comment Period:

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

Approval of the May 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Chair Speas called for any corrections to the draft minutes. Hearing none, she then called for a motion to approve the May 4, 2023 minutes. The motion was unanimously carried.

Old Business:

- **Sara Morgan** gave a presentation on “Landscaping and Screening,” updating the status of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. See: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/sites/planningcommission/files/assets/documents/pdf/lupr/landscaping%20and%20screening%20zoa%20-%20lupr%205-25-23%20presentation.pdf>

- Update on the “Friends of Trees Awards.” Chair Speas would like to have all nominations by July 14, 2023. The Tree Commission will review them in September. The award ceremony will be in the fall. [Correction: nominations’ deadline is July 31]
- Update on the 50th Anniversary of the Tree Commission Board of Supervisors (BOS) Proclamation. The Tree Commission will write a draft proclamation to send to the BOS. This will not require a vote. The Proclamation will occur sometime in the fall.
- Update: Tree Commission letter of support for UFMD’s Inflation Reduction grant proposal was sent.

New Business:

- Presentation on Virginia’s Big Tree Program by Commissioner Bob Vickers. See <https://bigtree.cnre.vt.edu/index.html> Commissioner Vickers has measured and reported more than 150 trees to the State database. Many were new state champions or in the top three in size and several were also national champions.
- Due to Commissioner McGlone’s retirement in July 2023, there is a vacancy for a Tree Commissioner to serve on the Tree Planting and Preservation Fund grant review panel. Chair Speas asked interested Commissioners to submit their names to her by email.
- Commissioner Frank is drafting bylaws for the Tree Commission. She will submit them for review as soon as possible.
- Chair Speas announced that she has sent all Commissioners Annual Report assignments and deadlines. She encouraged them to include photos in their drafts.

Updates from the Director of the Urban Forest Management Division

In the absence of Director **Brian Keightly**, **Joan Allen** reported. She requested that Commissioners look up at Beech Trees. If the leaves have dark stripes that is a symptom of Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). It is best seen by looking upward into the canopy. This is a very recent pest that the County is actively monitoring. Presently there is no management or treatment strategy. It has been seen at Burke Lake, Hemlock Overlook, Fountain Head, and along the Pohick Stream Valley park property. Joan will submit a brief write-up on this so Commissioners can give this information to their District Supervisors for their newsletters.

Commissioner Announcements:

- Commissioner Vickers announced that Dranesville Supervisor Foust has appointed Barbara Ryan to fill his position following his retirement.
- Commissioner Kadet reported that Fairfax Tree Stewards had their first graduating class in May, bringing the total number of Tree Stewards to 30. Many of the group attended the recent Trees Virginia Urban Forest Roundtable on Oak Decline.
- Commissioner Frank announced that the Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech this year will be training Tree Stewards as Advanced Master Gardeners.

- Commissioner Peters reported that the Northern Virginia Soil and Water District is collecting reports on how to prevent the spread of and to eradicate *Trapa Bispinosa*, an invasive aquatic plant invading rivers, tidal bays, and ponds throughout Fairfax County. Small populations can be hand-pulled, but larger infestations require alternative treatment or removal by volunteer groups. Sightings should be reported to The US Geological Survey.
- Chair Speas reported that the Roundtable on Oak Decline was quite valuable and recommends subscribing to the Trees Virginia list for announcements of future Roundtable events. Commissioner McGlone recommended attending the Trees Virginia Waynesboro Tree Care Workshop in September.
- Commissioner Suter advised the Commissioner that some homeowners are preferring to use sheep over herbicides to clear out large infestations of weeds and invasive plants. He noted, however, that sheep will eat everything, so native plants and trees, such as oak and red bud saplings, have to be identified and caged off to protect them from the sheep. Disclosure: Commissioner Suter owns a sheep mowing business.
- Commissioner Leslie reported concerns of Conservation Easements being used for development. Commissioner McGlone suggested that this should be looked into.
- Commissioner McGlone announced that Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant Program, under the Virginia Department of Forestry is accepting applications for grants.

Also, there is funding for the Ash Treatment Cost-Share Program under which landowners and organizations can get grants of 50% of the cost of injection treatment for Ash trees infected by Emerald Ash Borers. Applications are due on June 17, 2023.

<https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/emerald-ash-borer-treatment-program>

The Department of Forestry has a new pilot program called “Throwing Shade on Virginia.” It encourages the sale of native trees and shrubs by giving customer discounts of \$25 on eligible trees and shrubs priced at \$50 or more. Three nurseries are participating: Burke Nursery & Garden Centre (Burke), Woodstock Gardens (Woodstock), and Coastal Landscapes & Nursery (Virginia Beach).

The next meeting of the Potomac Watershed Roundtable will be on July 7, 2023, in Warrenton, VA sponsored by the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District.

- Commissioner John Burke announced that ecologist David Alexander will be in charge of Meadows and Reforestation. FCPA is in the process of hiring another ecologist, since the Bamboo Initiative to remove running bamboo from the Parks has been funded.
- Chair Speas awarded Commissioner McGlone, who is retiring at the end of June 2023, with a certificate recognizing his long and valuable service on the Tree Commission.

Chair Speas adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.