

Present:

Pat Howell, Co-chair
Carol Hotton, Co-chair
Melanie Fosnaught
Nicolien van Schouwen
Betsy Strickler

The meeting was opened at approximately 6:45 PM

1. Before the Commission began discussing the agenda items, Takoma Park citizen Alan Fetter asked to speak to the Commission about three matters: (1) a claim that he believed his neighbor, who was not present, has against the city involving property damage caused by a tree, (2) a fine assessed against Mr. Fetter for digging near a protected tree without a permit, and (3) trees on public property along Flower Avenue in Takoma Park that Mr. Fetter believes pose a hazard. The Commissioners advised Mr. Fetter that the Tree Commission was not the appropriate office to consider his or his neighbor's claims and suggested that they contact the City's attorney. Regarding the third topic, the Commission suggested that Mr. Fetter contact the City Arborist.

2. After Mr. Fetter left, the Commission discussed ways of educating the public about the Takoma Park Tree Ordinance and the permit process.

3. The Commission updated the Contact List Our discussion focused on the letter Carol Hotton had drawn up to be sent to the mayor, Bruce Williams:

- How much does the arborist need to be involved with the Tree Commission besides the judicial cases? It would be helpful if the arborist twice a year would make a short presentation to the Tree Commission focusing on the commissioners as well as setting the agenda for special events.
- Is it legitimate that the Tree Commission adopts also an educational/promotional role?

2. The role of the Tree Commission is not quite clearly defined and the commissioners discussed and agreed:

- The prime directive of the Tree Commission is judicial, to follow the rules stated in the tree ordinance
- What are the expectations the council has of the Tree Commission?
- How to change the negative image of the Tree Commission with the public?
- Is there a role for educating about trees, how to protect our forest canopy in a positive and creative way?
- Commission decided to change the letter to the mayor to a Tree Commission mission statement for presentation to the City Council along with the Commission bylaws. Carol will draft the Mission statement incorporating suggested changes.

- Role and relationship with the arborist versus the Tree Commission. Is the arborist the staff liaison between the Tree Commission and the City??
- Commissioners agreed that the Arbor Day handing out of tree seedlings would be better if it is done at the Takoma Park Street Festival in October, which is a much better time for planting than in the middle of the summer. We need advice from the arborist on this issue. A suggestion was made to hold a tree giveaway twice a year, once on Arbor Day and the other during the Festival.

3. The commissioners worked on the existing by-laws and Carol will draft the new by-laws with the suggested changes incorporated. Also the role of the arborist vis a vis the Tree Commission needs to be defined.

4. Point came up that the Tree Commission will hand a "packet" to new commissioners. Who puts this together so we can hand it out?

5. Commission agreed to make a list with all the addresses, phone numbers and emails.

Meeting adjourned at 8.30 PM