

## **Minutes of Takoma Park Tree Commission meeting**

December 14, 2010

By Betsy Strickler

Location: Takoma Park Community Center

Present: Carol Hotton, Nicolien van Schouwen, Betsy Strickler , John Hemphill

Meeting opened at approximately 6:45 pm.

- (1) The Commission discussed the draft “Report on the city of Takoma Park’s Existing and Possible Tree Canopy”, provided to the Commission by the City Arborist. Nicolien suggested, and all agreed, that the Report, which indicates that Takoma Park has a better than average tree canopy compared to other local jurisdictions, would provide a good basis for instituting an outreach program to encourage city residents to continue being good stewards of the canopy. Such a program would recognize and emphasize the positive actions citizens take to preserve existing trees and to plant new ones, rather than focusing solely on enforcing the prohibitions of the Tree Ordinance. Elements of a stewardship program might include:
  - a. Creating a “good steward” certification, to be awarded to citizens who meet criteria to be established by the Commission, with input from the City Arborist. Possible criteria discussed by the Commissioners include, for example:
  - b.
    - i) planting and/or preserving young trees for the purpose of replacing the existing canopy for future generations;
    - ii) having a certain percentage of native tree species;
    - iii) caring for mature trees, including removing invasive vines from trees on one’s property.

Carol volunteered to draft a statement that the Commission is considering such a program.

- (2) The Commission again agreed that contributing a monthly column to the City Newsletter or Takoma Voice would be a valuable outreach effort. Among the topics suggested were: (1) the recent Tree Canopy Report, (b) the tree stewardship program, and (c) tree care, including watering, removing invasive vines and the dangers of digging around trees.
- (3) The Commission discussed a new idea to encourage residents to plant trees as memorials, possibly in locations that the Arborist determines would be appropriate.
- (4) The Commission discussed the City Council’s consideration of changes to the Tree Ordinance, particularly the question of whether the requirement and formula for

replacement costs are fair, and whether it would be appropriate, in partial payment of tree replacements costs, to give credit to homeowners for trees that they, or prior owners, have planted on their properties. It was determined that no statement should be drafted or considered until the Commission could discuss the topic with the arborist.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.