

## Minutes of the City of Takoma Park Tree Commission

August 11, 2015

By Carol Hotton

Location: Lilac Room, Takoma Park City Building

Present: Colleen Cordes, Chair

Carol Hotton

Gresham Lowe

Jerry Burgess

Meeting convened at approximately 6:45 pm

Before meeting began, a homeowner (didn't identify himself) came to express concern about the high cost of removal of a tree for which he had been granted a permit to remove, as well as concern about his belief that the tree was hazardous. We welcomed him but indicated that a Tree Commission was not the correct venue to be discussing his concerns--he needed to obtain more information from the arborist and if necessary, to file an appeal.

1. We welcomed our newest member, Jerry Burgess, who described his background and reasons for joining Tree Commission. As a geoecologist studying invasive soil animals, such as earthworms, he was very interested in addressing invasive species and biodiversity. We introduced ourselves as well.
2. Carol described the 3 basic functions of the Tree Commission (advisory, education and outreach, and judicial). Colleen briefly described recent issues with which the TC has been dealing: Takoma Junction, proposed Environmental Educator position, ward by ward analysis of change in tree canopy, PEPCO tree removal practices, McLaughlin Woods.
3. Update on McLaughlin Woods: City has obtained title to parcel 2 (check) after 180 redemption period; city still working out liens. The group that originally formed to prevent development/sale of the parcel (called the 'Plan B' group) is planning workdays in the fall for removal of invasive vines. With help of arborist, group has identified most critical area to attack first (large trees covered with vines). **Action Item:** Carol will inform Tree Commission of work days and provide Cindy Dyballa's contact information if any one interested in joining group.
4. Discussion of upcoming Tree Walk, Oct 17, 10:30-noon, New Hampshire Gardens. Council Member Fred Schultz can attend. Diana Kohn of Historic Takoma agreed to participate and describe history of neighborhood. Colleen suggested providing information sheets to participants (on history? Tree care?) **Action Items:** Need to determine exact route for walk soon, especially for publicizing. Not sure who is going to do this? Carol will contact Linette Lander, former commissioner and resident of NH Gardens, on publicizing event. Colleen will contact local neighborhood leaders for publicity. Gresham will obtain information from arborist on when and what species available for Fall City Bulk Buy Program and provide coupons at walk.
5. Brief discussion of possible Winter Tree event, perhaps a winter tree id walk. Involve Historic Takoma and/or Library.
6. Further discussion of regular 'Natural Takoma' piece in Takoma Park Newsletter. Suggest broadening essays to include not just tree matters but also other nature-related topics, and include contributions from Committee on Environment, Friends of Sligo Creek, individuals such as David Blockstein and Lauren Wheeler (rain gardens). Once we have received indications of interest from other parties, a letter or email to new editor will be composed to propose column. **Action Items:** Colleen will determine who is replacing Ginny Myers as the new editor of the newsletter. Carol will contact Linette Lander (member of Takoma Park Horticulture Club) and Cindy Dyballa (co-chair of COE) about contributing articles. Carol will also invite Lauren Wheeler to discuss rain gardens. Gresham will talk to David Blockstein for contributions and other contacts.

7. Discussion of including children's artwork with 'Natural Takoma' articles. Also discussed possibility of coordinating displays of children's art and books in Takoma Park Library related to Natural Takoma articles. Broader discussion of incorporating tree topics into elementary and secondary school lesson plans.
8. Colleen stated that a concerned resident (George) and a professor who teaches at Montgomery College (Amanda Truett) had contacted her about damage to trees from construction work on campus. She arranged a meeting with them on Aug 18 at 3:15 pm at Amanda's office on campus.
9. Update on ward by ward mapping of tree canopy. Erkin Ozberk, City Planner, indicated that he had a set-up and personnel that could transfer Montgomery County canopy update to a ward-by-ward City analysis, if Todd Bolton was unable to accomplish this.
10. Brief update on July meeting with Mayor Williams concerning appointment of Commissioners and whether there was a new requirement for ward diversity. Denny asked the mayor what he and the City Council thought of Tree Commission. City Council members liked TC's active involvement and recommendations on tree issues. In fall City Council will review interactions between City Boards, Commissions and Committees. Councilmembers also interested in how pre-planting and bulk buy programs are functioning. Mayor mentioned that Tim Male has expressed interest in revisiting the issue of solar panels and the Tree Ordinance.
11. Minutes for March, April and July, 2015 approved. November, 2014, minutes still missing; Mel Fosnaught will continue to look for them.
12. Carol expressed interest in following up with Dan Seligman on plan to have Cub Scouts distribute tree seedlings to residents. **Action Item:** Colleen will provide Carol with Dan's email.