

## Minutes of the Takoma Park Tree Commission

Oct 13, 2015

By Colleen Cordes

Location: Rose Room, Takoma Park City Building

Present: Carol Hotton, Chair

Gresham Lowe, Vice Chair

Colleen Cordes, Secretary

Denny May

Members of the Public: Two students from Johns Hopkins University's masters program in public health sat in, as their choice among those suggested by their professor, Dr. Cindy Parker, to meet an assignment about observing an environmentally-oriented public meeting. Nelson, a Takoma Avenue resident, also observed the meeting, with an interest in possibly applying for the opening on the Commission.

1) The proposed change in the bylaws, to clarify rotation for offices of Chair and Vice-Chair, was approved by consensus.

2) Colleen volunteered to serve as Secretary for six months.

3) Carol described roles of Commission for three members of the public. Denny suggested that the Commission seek data on the number and resolution status of appeals in recent years.

4) Planning for Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> Tree Walk in Ward 6: Denny volunteered to bring a truckload of leaves and wood chips to demonstrate how to mulch around newly planted City trees. Further publicity was planned, including reminders to list serves and alerting residents that the Arborist extended the deadline to use discount coupons for buying large young trees to Monday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>. Arborist will walk the route through New Hampshire Gardens with Commissioners on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> to point out trees and issues to be noted during the walk. **Action Item:** All who can will attend the preliminary walk with the Arborist, and everyone will bring food, maps, etc., to the Tree Walk, as planned in previous meeting.

5) Update on Natural Takoma feature for City newsletter: Colleen reported that the new editor of the newsletter is open to discussing the idea for 2016 and said she would be back in touch after she has finished preparing the November issue of the newsletter. Also, there was discussion of groups and individuals who have indicated enthusiastic support and willingness to help generate material for such a feature. Discussion of creating a draft list of potential topics, including: Tips about which toxic products to avoid in treating trees for pests, advice on avoiding building or paying for mulch "volcanoes," basic tree I.D. information, tree labels on significant City trees, how to prepare acorns for food consumption, the research on relationship between trees and health. **Action Item:** Colleen should contact editor by early November if editor has not emailed or called back.

6) Update on Scout tree planting project and further discussion: It's not clear whether the Cub Scouts father who initially contacted us, Dan Seligman, is able to pursue a project whereby Cub

Scouts would help neighbors plant trees. Gresham reported that for Scouts programs in general we would need to work with them a year in advance for a service project. The work could include planting, mulching, vine removal. The Commission could draft a letter for Cub, Boy & Girl Scouts, and Eagle Scouts to propose a service project. Gresham suggested tagging any trees Scouts or youth groups plant with the name of the troop or group and the year, on copper tags.

**Action Items:** Carol will draft a proposal letter for all of the youth groups in the City. Gresham will find the Council leader who works with 10 troops and who could help identify who should receive the proposal. Gresham will also try to find copper tags at good wholesale price. Denny will reach out to a Blair High School representative to discuss how tree planting might be pursued as an opportunity for student service hours. Colleen will contact Dan Seligman again and ask if he still wants to be involved in either tree planting or mulching.

7) Update on McLaughlin Woods: Carol reported that volunteers have already had one vine-removal and cleanup day in the woods. The next is Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, the day of the Tree Walk, and there's also one for Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, from 1-3 pm. Carol suggested that the Commission could publicize and encourage other neighborhoods to try doing what neighbor volunteers do at Opal Daniels Park, in terms of meeting periodically to remove invasive vines and cleaning up the wooded area, and successfully petitioned City for a rain garden.

8) Update on comparing 2014 data to 2009 data for tree canopy coverage over the entire City and by wards. Colleen reported that it's unclear now whether the City Planning Office and/or the Arborist have the software and expertise needed to analyze this information from the County's online databases, which now include both the old database and the new one just completed by the University of Vermont. **Action Item:** Denny will ask the professor who teaches a USDA soil science class he's taking who also works for the County's Planning Office if she could help us decipher the comparative data for both years, by City and by ward, for Takoma Park.

August minutes were approved. September minutes will be considered at the November meeting. **Action Item:** All should be prepared to amend or approve the September and October minutes at the November meeting, which will be 6:30 pm Tuesday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015.