

## TREE COMMISSION MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

**Present:** Carol Hotton, Chair; Gresham Lowe, Denny May, Tina Murray, and Colleen Cordes

**Arbor Day Planning: Action Items:** All members agreed to publicize the day through City's email alert, website and Facebook page, neighborhood listservs, and to ask Council members to share information about Arbor Day in early April with their constituents. **Carol** will email information sheets to Commission members for each of the trees to be given away at Arbor Day. Colleen or Tina will ask the Library to set up a tree book display. Colleen will send a template of a publicity message from last year as a sample for others. **Gresham or Colleen** will check with Todd about getting the Arbor Day banner up a week ahead. **Tina** will ask to have news posted on City's Facebook page. **All** will bring recycled plastic bags to pack wet tree seedlings in for the free distribution.

**Continued Discussion of Preparing Background Fact Sheet on Tree Benefits, especially environmental benefits:** Such a Fact Sheet would provide the Council with information to consider in terms of analyzing any future proposed changes to the Tree Ordinance and also in considering future expected proposals on goals for the City's urban tree canopy. The Commission and the Committee on the Environment are cooperating in a Joint Tree Canopy Working Group to draft such proposals. The discussion reiterated that such goals should include a goal for tree and ecosystem biodiversity, resilience, and a numerical goal for citywide and possibly ward by ward tree canopy cover. The fact sheet was envisioned as possibly a two-pager (if printed, one sheet of paper) with bullet points but with references available either in fine print or separately -- for the Council and city residents on the multiple environmental benefits of the City's tree canopy. Tina shared information from the Alliance for Community Trees which can be adapted for the background fact sheet. **Action Items: Members agreed** to finish a version of the fact sheet ready to handout at the Green Fest on April 30. **Carol** will draft a list of environmental benefits to begin the fact sheet. Working from those, **Colleen** will write a first draft. **Denny** will check for any written information from a recent White House webinar on the capacity of trees to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. **Colleen** will search for information that deals with conflicts between shade trees and solar energy panels.

**Continued Follow-Up to Tree Canopy Measurements and Goals:** The Commission will meet as soon as possible with interested members of the Committee on the Environment at the Joint Tree Canopy Working Group meeting discussed above to continue planning for proposing citywide goals to the Council. Commission members recognized need for more data about how many mature trees are being lost and the survival rate of newly planted young trees. Gresham suggested we also need information about the relative age mix of Takoma Park's trees. **Unfinished business: No decision was made about how to pursue information from the City Arborist or elsewhere as to need for more data identified above.**

**Further Planning for County Green Festival:** The county Green Festival on April 30 will be in Takoma Park this year, in and outside the Community Center on Maple Avenue, from 11 am to 4 pm. The Commission has been told it will have a spot in the outdoor Native Plant area if it registers for the spot soon. Members agreed to distribute free tree seedlings left over from Arbor Day and possibly one or a few more rare native tree saplings that might be made available by Earth Sangha and that could be raffled. Members agreed to consider scheduling specific discussions or demonstrations as part of the Commission's contribution, for example, a mulching demonstration, and possibly a short

talk about the importance of urban tree canopy. Also, possibly an informational talk about cutting endangered cypress trees for mulch, to encourage county residents to avoid buying cypress mulch (which can be distinguished by its red color). **Action Items:** **Denny** will fill out the online registration form for the Green Fest for the Commission. **Colleen** will do a first draft of the Fact Sheet on tree benefits in time for the Commission to edit a version and have it ready for Green Fest. **All members** will come prepared at April's meeting to finalize ideas for the Commission's participation, including possible talks or presentations to be scheduled throughout the 11 am- 4 pm day. **Denny** will plan for leading a mulching demonstration at the Green Fest. **Colleen** will ask Todd if he will be available that day to give a presentation on tree canopy issues or topic of his choice. **Gresham** will bring a canopy in case of rain and **Carol** will bring a table if we need one. **Denny** will bring some silt fencing to demonstrate how to protect street trees from salt sprayed by salt trucks during icy weather.

**New Business:** Issues discussed for future consideration: **Denny** raised the topic of deer's impact on trees in Takoma Park. **Colleen** raised the topic of how to meet the educational needs for landscapers working in the City who are not familiar with the City's Tree Ordinance, in terms of pruning and digging in critical root zones, or with latest recommendations for mulching and other tree care. **Denny** raised the topic of local hardware stores selling cypress mulch, at a time when the cypress is endangered. **Action Items:** **Denny** will work on a plan to address the deer issue. **All** will decide whether the Commission should host a short talk about the cypress mulch issue at its table at the Green Fest. **Denny** will draft an email to ask one local hardware store which sells the mulch to stop selling it.

(Minutes approved online.)