

## TREE COMMISSION APRIL 12th, 2016

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

**Discussion with Teresa Stubbs, local resident concerned about the impact on trees of the WSSC's Eastern Avenue Water and Sewer Main replacement project.** Teresa recounted the history, from her perspective and based on her extensive involvement in the issue and a few related WSSC documents which she shared with Commissioners. Discussion included concerns about whether homeowners have enough information about the environmental impacts for their individual property and for their neighborhood of the various options – especially the option of placing a new sewer main in backyards along a proposed 20-foot-wide easement strip – to be able to make informed choices in voting on which option they preferred and in deciding whether they want to sign easement agreements. **Action Items:** After Teresa left, Commissioners continued discussion and agreed that **Carol** would try to schedule a meeting for the Commission with Daryl Braithwaite. The purpose would be to seek more information and to share the Commission's concerns that homeowners, before being asked to vote on a final option and to sign an easement agreement, should have access to adequate information about the projected impacts on trees and other environmental impacts, including the environmental impact assessment being conducted by the County Department of Environmental Protection. To be adequate, such information would need to include a licensed arborist's assessment of the impacts on the specific major urban trees that would be affected. **Denny** will call Alice Witherspoon on the staff of State Senator Jamie Raskin, who has been working on the issue on behalf of local residents.

**Continued Follow-Up to Tree Canopy Measurements and Goals:** Discussion continued. Gresham suggested that any goals set for biodiversity included attention to the proportion of trees in the City of different ages. Information has been shared with the City Arborist to connect him with the Montgomery County Planning Office that collected the updated information on Takoma Park's tree canopy coverage. **Action Item: Colleen** will take Commissioners' feedback to first draft of Tree Benefits Fact Sheet and rewrite the Fact Sheet in time for a first version to be available for review and approval by other members of the Joint Group on Tree Canopy in time for the first approved version to be distributed at the GreenFest.

**Discussion of How Tree Ordinance Requirements Are Communicated to the Public:** It was noted that all new homebuyers in the City are now being apprised at the time of purchase of the ordinance. There was agreement that it would be helpful to explore a mailing to current private property owners in the City to inform or remind them of major aspects of the ordinance. **Action Item: All** should read Carol's proposal for changing the description on the City's website. **All** should continue exploring idea of mailing to current owners.

**Discussion of City Staff's Proposal for new Environmental Enforcement and Education Position:** There was concern that it would be difficult to combine the enforcement and education roles if the position, as proposed, is placed within the Police Department. The Commission decided not to offer an official recommendation in favor of that new item in the City budget, as its strong identification with enforcement does not seem compatible with meeting the need for an Environmental Educator that the Commission had identified last year and recommended new staffing to meet.

**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 made a tentative schedule of events for its participation in the event and agreed to schedule a later meeting to finalize its plan.