

Minutes of the City of Takoma Park Tree Commission

February 11, 2020

By Carol Hotton

Location: Hydrangea Room, Takoma Park Community Center

Present: John Barnwell, Bruce Levine, Co-Chairs; Carol Hotton, Secretary; Tina Murray, Nancy Cohen, Commissioners; Jan van Zutphen, Urban Forest Manager; Daryl Braithwaite, Director, Public Works; Molly Crawford, Chris Campbell, City residents

Meeting convened at 6:45 pm.

1. Minutes for January 7, January 14 meetings approved.

2. Discussion of Public Works budget from Daryl Braithwaite

- A. John invited Daryl to discuss Public Works budget as it pertains to trees, given that the 2021 City budget is being discussed.
- B. Daryl noted proposed 2021 budget flat from previous year.
- C. Most Public Works divisions on-person operations, e.g. Urban Forest Manager.
- D. FY2020 breakdown for tree expenditures:
 - a. Personnel: \$117,480
 - b. Supplies: \$1000
 - c. Tree removal, maintenance: \$119,000 (includes carryover of \$19,000 from FY2019)
 - d. Tree planting: \$25,000 (sourced from fee in lieu payments for removals)
 - e. Bulk Buy planting: \$15,000 (sourced from General Fund)
 - f. Consulting services: \$5000 (subcontractors, e.g. LIDAR study)
 - g. Watering: \$1000
 - h. Training: \$1850
 - i. Low income tree removal/maintenance: \$25,000
- E. Tree removals increased from 119 waivers in FY2015 to 284 in FY2020 due to blight and general aging of trees. Ratio of 75% fee in lieu to 25% tree replacement has held steady over years. Tree impact assessments have risen sharply in FY2019, due to construction activity.
- F. Daryl noted that residents tend to wait until tree requires waiver, presumably in order to avoid paying tree replacement costs.
- G. Concern expressed about proposed City wide carbon reduction initiative might cut funds for other initiatives such as increased support for tree planting.
- H. More funds needed for outreach & education, as well as support for replanting and maintenance for residents. Bulk buy program should be used for replanting. UFM noted that

older trees require maintenance costs; younger trees are generally maintenance free (except for watering during severe droughts). Trees should be treated as a community good, so costs should be spread equally (progressively) through community.

- I. Online forms for tree removal and protection should reduce costs over long term and make it easier for residents to apply for permits. Online payment to be included.
- J. Budget dates: each department contributes numbers for their department by end of February. City manager presents budget at end of April. City Council discusses in May.

3. Urban Forest Manager Update.

- A. Hearing scheduled for Feb 27. New attorney Mike Rynd will deal with hearings. Attorney Skip Kornberg will deal with Tree Ordinance Revisions.
- B. Work session on trees scheduled for Feb 12.
- C. Arbor Day on Sat, Apr 4, 10 am – 2 pm.
- D. Tree Commission decided not to participate in GreenFest.

4. Discussion of new City initiative on carbon emission reduction.

- A. Budget for 3 years: \$100K – operational and educational budget. Includes missions audits for each household, determine what to phase out. Rehab for 500 properties.
- B. COE unable to reach agreement on how to include trees in this process.

5. City Council Draft Resolution on Tree Canopy.

- A. Draft created by Cindy Dyballa, Kacy Kostiuk and Peter Kovar.
- B. Comments on draft from Tree Commission requested.
- C. Responses to suggestions from City Council: they did not like 1:1 replacement suggestion. Wanted to include ecosystem services concept in Ordinance. Council did not include or were not aware of suggested changes to Section 12.12.140: Duties of UFM. Council will further discuss during work session. Draft resolution included few of Tree Commission's suggested changes to Ordinance.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 pm.