

## Minutes of the City of Takoma Park Tree Commission

May 12, 2020

By Carol Hotton

**Location:** virtual meeting by Zoom

**Participants:** John Barnwell, Bruce Levine, Co-Chairs; Carol Hotton, Secretary; Tina Murray, Nancy Cohen, Commissioners; Daryl Braithwaite, Director, Public Works; Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk; Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa, City resident

Note: April meeting cancelled – City buildings closed due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Meeting convened at 6:50 pm.

1. Approval of March minutes was deferred because Urban Forest Manager wanted to review them. Since UFM resigned in April, this is now moot. March minutes will be re-circulated.
2. Presentation by Daryl Braithwaite on Urban Forest Manager position and budget
  - a. UFM position to be advertised in 1-2 weeks. Currently waiting for more applications. Phone interview will reduce applicants to 6 or 7, who will be interviewed electronically.
  - b. In the meantime, City using services of Keith Pitchford, who reviews permits and assesses hazardous trees on Tuesday and Thursdays.
  - c. City street planting begun: lindens, hornbeams, dogwoods, magnolias. Number reduced to 123 from 145 trees because some residents rejected them. Other sites will be found for the 'rejected' trees.
  - d. Emails to UFM now being handled by Daryl and Ian Chamberlain (Construction Manager, DPW).
  - e. Order cancelled for Arbor Day trees from wholesale provider.
  - f. City hiring freeze in effect, but UFM position treated as essential.
  - g. No cuts proposed for Urban Forest Manager budget, despite loss of \$100K of tax rebate from Montgomery County. Funds for tree inventory deferred.
3. Tree Ordinance discussion continued.
  - a. City subcommittee (Peter Kovar, Cindy Dyballa, Kacy Kostiuk) still at work on tree ordinance. They have indicated that they have further questions, but so far TC has heard nothing.
  - b. Up to now, the City Council and/or subcommittee has received from the Tree Commission:
    - i) July 22, 2019 recommendations
    - ii) Joint Committee on Tree Canopy statement
    - iii) Framework for establishing tree canopy goals
    - iv) Oct, 2019 recommendations
    - v) Dec 19, 2019 recommendations
  - c. What stage has the Tree Ordinance review reached? Is it ready to be voted on, or are there still more questions?

- d. Most recent draft revisions of Ordinance from City propose to eliminate most waivers and reduce replacement fund.
- e. City Council appears to be ready to gut Tree Ordinance, eliminating replacement costs for trees that fall into 4-9 score (the majority of tree removal permits fall into this category) AND allow diversion of funds from tree replacement to general funds. These proposals, in combination with ongoing canopy loss from a variety of factors probably underlain by climate change, will cause massive canopy loss.

To Do: John will pull together and summarize TC points, emphasizing the massive loss of canopy City Council's proposal will cause. Circulated and sent to Council before next meeting

Meeting adjourned 7:43 pm