

## Minutes of the City of Takoma Park Tree Commission

June 9, 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

Meeting convened at 6:50 pm.

1. Minutes for February, March and May approved, with minor changes.
2. Urban Forest Manager update, presented by Daryl Braithwaite
  - a. Eight applicants so far for Urban Forest Manger position. Virtual interviews will occur in the next couple of weeks.
  - b. Spring street tree planting ended. Glenside, Erskine, Grant, Colby planted. Original number of 145 reduced to 129 as some residents declined trees.
  - c. Spring bulk buy successful: residents on 22 properties requested 32 trees.
  - d. Daryl presented comparison of actual tree replacements from 4/19-4/20 vs. proposed changes in replacement requirements from Tree Commission and City Council. Both would result in some loss of revenue, but City Council proposal would reduce funds from tree replacement by more than half.
3. Discussion of response to questions from City Council tree group (Council Members Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk). [Questions in italics.]
  - a. *Definition of invasive species (12.04.010 "definitions")*: Fine as is.
  - b. *Updated legislative findings section (12.12.010)*. A, B. Discussion of what it means to 'promote' a forest. Suggest change to nurture? D. Okay to change 'ecosystem services' to 'services'. TM recommends change as follows: Stewardship of the City's urban forest is a community effort requiring the contribution of all members of community, and the regulation of actions affecting the urban forest provides benefits to residents, and property and business owners. D4: Change 'mitigating the City's contribution to climate change' to 'mitigating (or reducing) the City's contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions'. DB notes it is valuable to keep tree canopy goals in legislative findings. City should develop goals and present in report to Council.
  - c. 12.12.010G. Discussion of whether policy on equity should be included in Ordinance. General agreement that it should be.
  - d. Section 12.12.087 (appeals). Is the authority to approve a permit with modifications new? The general ordering presented here represents an improvement over the current ordinance, but wording needs to clarify that permit holders cannot appeal an approved permit.
  - e. *Proposed new reports to Council (12.12.140)*. Are the reports required in this section available to the public? Daryl confirmed that they are.
  - f. *Overall structure and order of sections 12.12.030, 12.12.040, 12.12.050, 12.12.070, 12.12.080, 12.12.085, and 12.12.087 -- Is the overall ordinance structure effective and*

*understandable to the Tree Commission?* It could potentially be more logical if these sections were organized into just three: Tree Impact Assessments, Tree Protection Plans, and Tree Removal Permits. However, it may not be worth the cost of attorney to further simplify the language/structure. A simpler summary could be on the website for residents, separate from the legal document

- g. 2. *Do you have any thoughts on the draft tree canopy resolution?* Concern expressed regarding ability of City to fund LIDAR analysis of canopy every 3 years. Perhaps modify to: “LIDAR or an equally sound technical assessment of the forest canopy.” Doubt expressed that percentage canopy goal is useful or actionable.
4. Fiscal impact of proposed reduction in tree replacement requirements discussed. TC should present views on replacement to City Council before they meet, rather than after.
5. Discussion of Tree Canopy Goals. City Council should be asked—how are canopy goals to be implemented? They should commit to a strategic planning process including timeline and set of goals.
6. John will draft statement of our views, emphasizing fiscal impact of reducing tree replacement, circulate for approval by TM and submit to City Council.

Meeting adjourned 8:08 pm