

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

TREE COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

7:00 PM – on Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Meipo Martin, Ward 2; Paul Obrien, Ward 4; Bart Sheard, Ward 3; Xavier Blake Sparrow, Ward 3; Gorky Villa, Ward 2; James Woodworth, Ward 2; Marty Frye, Urban Forest Manager; Jason Parkins, Esq. Karpinski, Cornbrooks & Karp, P.A. (on behalf of City Attorney).

1. Brief review of meeting & hearing processes
 - Chair will usually bring meeting to order;
 - Typical agenda includes:
 - I. Review & approve minutes from last meeting;
 - II. Public Comment
 - III. Marty's Report/Urban Forest Manager
 - IV. Any information re upcoming hearings
 - V. Other business
 - VI. Adjourn (Meetings may last as little as 15 minutes, or up to two hours, but typically 60 min +/-)
 - Process of appeals hearings:
 - Prior to hearing, all materials/exhibits are distributed (hard-copy or electronic)
 - City attorney helps re: steps/script
 - Hearing starts, Introductions of all participants
 - Oath administered
 - Appellant presents
 - City presents
 - Discussion, Q&A/cross examine – opportunity for any commissioners to ask questions of either party
 - Open hearing concludes; commissioners adjourn to private session with city attorney to deliberate
 - Draft and review of decision
 - Delivery of decision by city attorney to all parties
2. Public comment - NONE
3. Urban Forest Manager report (Marty Frye)
 - Fall tree planting program was successful
 - 49 trees planted
 - Messaging was posted to typical places: FAcEBook/social media; Newsletter; e-newsletter; list-serves; certain councilmembers helpful in re-posting

- Observations of deer damage; some tree species more susceptible to deer buck rub than others, esp. southern magnolia;
- Violations/citations:
 - Recent process improvements have been made in coordination with code enforcement;
 - Need to improve public awareness of tree protection regulations and permit requirements; need to get word out to avoid situations;
 - Rely on anonymous citizen calls, code enforcement staff;
- Observation that hazard tree requests peak in later summer/early fall (reflecting concerns about strong storms, evidence of drought stress)
- DPW had recent opportunity to demo new “GreenWorks” cordless battery powered equipment, including chain saws, etc.

4. Choose new officers for Commission

- Bart Sheard agreed to handle chair duties (at least for remainder of CY2021)
- James Woodworth agreed to be vice chair and secretary
- Discussion that by-laws may need amendment
- Discussion of term lengths, rationale for staggered terms

5. Discussion of areas for improvement presented to City Council, Mayor and Public Works Director during meeting on Sept 14, 2021

- This topic was tabled for discussion at a future meeting in 2022

ADJOURN: approximately 8:10 PM