

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

TREE COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

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

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for November meeting (Jim Woodworth)
 - Approved minutes submitted to Jessie Carpenter 2/10/2022.
2. Public Comments – none.
3. Urban Forest Manager report (Marty Frye)
 - Street tree pruning is under-way this winter (~1/2 per week)
 - Under supervision of new staffer, Anna Misch John, Vegetation Maintenance Supervisor
 - Prioritizing areas of traffic conflict with low-hanging branches for clearance of busses, garbage trucks, etc.
 - Multi-year effort during winter months
 - Unlikely that this would be a future volunteer opportunity (e.g. Citizen Pruners) because of staff capacity to oversee, liability, safety, quality control
 - Pilot planting effort underway – per Council directive
 - Targeted planting effort focused in Ward 6, multi-family residential/apartment/condo; commercial; institutional
 - Outreach underway for ‘free trees’ to be planted this spring
 - Target of ~10 trees
 - Q: can TP partake as a city in Tree Montgomery (or Forest Montgomery, or other programs)?
 - A: MF has an email inquiry in to POC
 - In contrast to ‘bulk buy’/’Plant A Tree’ program which is partially subsidized
 - Of note: accepting requests for spring ‘Plant A Tree’ program through Feb 21st for spring 2022.
 - As volume of tree plantings were to increase, question of staff capacity being stretched too thin
 - DPW contemplating an RFP for its own city tree-fund funded planting program; which would include consultation by landscape professional and planting
 - Sparked conversation about role of Tree Commission in Education and Outreach; after some discussion it was suggested that more time was

warranted for this topic and that it should be a formal agenda item for a future meeting; it was agreed to add to agenda for next meeting.

- Arbor Day
 - Foregoing an in-person bare-root seedling giveaway
 - Seedlings often end up dead
 - Considering a future containerized tree giveaway
 - Instead, considering a zoom webinar of a tree-related theme
 - If you have ideas to contribute for consideration, feel free to reach out to Marty

- 4. Discussion of detailed talking points presented to City Council, Mayor and Public Works Director during meeting on Sept 14, 2021. (Bart Sheard)
 - Reoccurring themes/issues noticed over multiple hearings
 - Compliance with TC decisions
 - Communications between TC and DPW/attorney
 - Integrity of hearing process
 - Commitments made during hearings under oath
 - Either not carried out/followed through
 - Or uncertainty if carried out or not
 - E.g. status of required replantings
 - E.g. commitments made by developer to engage neighbors on stormwater issues; did not occur prior to develop proceeding
 - Concern about perjury, making mockery of appeals and hearing process
 - Commission felt it was our responsibility to raise issues to Council
 - Council responsibility to act or not
 - Marty pointed out that its often the case that projects are drawn out and ongoing
 - Montgomery College is still under construction
 - It would not be useful to replant until construction activities have concluded
 - Commission to request follow-up meeting with city attorney to seek clarification about boundaries of commission hearings, decisions, follow-up discussions

- 5. Discussion of changes to Commission by-laws. (Bart Sheard)
 - Discrepancy/misalignment between individual commissioner appointment durations, and terms for officers
 - TP FY is July 1 – June 30; Officer terms are Oct 1 – Sept 30
 - Commissioners have staggered term lengths:
 - June 2022
 - June 2023
 - June 2024
 - Bart will send an email articulating the problem and possible solutions
 - Monthly meeting has changed from second Tuesday of month to second Wednesday of month
 - Motion to amend by-laws to change meeting day to second Wednesday – passed.

ADJOURN: approximately 8:15 PM