



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

## Tree Commission Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 26, 2019 ❖ 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Falls Church Community Center Teen Center

1. **Approval of January 16 Minutes:** The minutes for the January 16, 2019 meeting were approved.
2. **Public Comments:** None
3. **Staff Updates/ Informational Items:**
  - **Tree Commission code changes – name and structure:** The proposed Code change will go before the Council's Work Session next week with a first reading the following week. The second reading will be March 25. If amendments are approved, the TC will become the Urban Forestry Commission and will have an alternate member.
  - **Enforcement of nuisance vegetation/trees on commercial property:** Until 1990, the Vegetation Nuisance Code was part of the Tree Code. Now, it is part of commercial property site plans, which are enforceable in perpetuity. Newer properties fall under this, but for older properties, the Arborist technically doesn't have authority to remove nuisances. The Zoning Code also does not address this. Urban Forestry doesn't have a clear path for enforcement against nuisances, so Kate is working with the City to develop clear procedures for enforcement.
4. **Current Business**
  - **Bacterial Leaf Scorch of red oaks – proposed City response:** Charles gave a presentation on Bacterial Leaf Scorch. The City will send samples in late summer to Virginia Tech to confirm its suspicion of significant red oak leaf scorch presence. Symptoms worsen over 3 to 10 years, resulting in death. Maples, Sycamores/Plane trees, Oaks and Elms are susceptible, but the disease so far seems to prefer red oaks. The red oaks on Broad look worse because of restricted root space. There is no cure, and antibiotics can only slow the spread of the disease. Avoiding water stress and treating with growth regulators can also be helpful, but it does not seem effective to try to control the vectors (leaf hoppers). Chemical treatment is expensive; the cost may be \$1000 per tree, with part of the treatment needed annually and part every 2-3 years. The source of funding is not yet clear. If Bacterial Leaf Scorch is confirmed, the City will prioritize treatment of larger, healthier trees with sufficient growing space, in particular the 20 healthier trees along Hillwood and in the W Broad medians (about 10% of all the red oaks

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in the City streetscape). TC discussed possible replacement trees that are unsusceptible, along with the need for species diversity to compartmentalize epidemics.

- **Specimen Tree criteria:** Kathy will draft criteria for designating Specimen Trees to mirror the procedure set out in City Code.
- **Tree canopy/green space goals for the Comprehensive Plan:** The TC will propose a 50% goal for the Comp Plan. Of this, we need to look at the burden on low-density residential and parks (including schools). For instance, with a 15% canopy goal on high density, there is a burden of 75% on low density to achieve a 50% average canopy cover.
- **Annual Report:** Dennis has prepared the Annual Report. When he presents it at City Council, he'll note highs, lows and what 2019 will look like.
- **West Falls Church development Special Exception Entitlement – joint meeting with ESC and AAB –** TC notes that the streetscape setback was inconsistent, and it will request at least a standard streetscape width, with more than a 20-foot-wide setback in particular on Haycock and Rte. 7 (more than the minimum intended for larger streets in the Streetscape Standards). The TC will also recommend 15% canopy coverage, established as a standard in both our MUR Code and American Forests.
- **VPIS comments on Neighborhood Tree Program:** VPIS is considering changes to the NTP and want TC feedback. The City has not caught up with the street tree plantings, but there is concern at VPIS that there are no more street tree plantings needed. VPIS currently pays for trees on private property in the right of way; the City pays for right of way trees. It takes time to find available tree spaces because there is inconsistency in right of way zoning so it would be useful to have additional volunteers to ask homeowners if they want street trees. The TC discussed ideas for recruiting more volunteers.

**5. Plan Reviews:** None

**6. Future Business**

- **Urban Forest Management Plan – work plan items, UFMP development schedule**
- **Future of green space associated with Special Exception projects**
- **Code updates/modifications relating to urban forestry**
- **Standard private maintenance agreements for streetscapes**

*The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.*

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