



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 16, 2019 ❖ 7:30 - 9:30 pm

George Mason High School Library

Present: Dennis Szymanski, Kathy Philpott Costa, Barbara Tesner, Karen Jones, Kate Reich, Charles Prince, Tim Stevens, Dan Sze, Zach Holmes

1. Approval of December 19 Minutes: The minutes for the December 19, 2018 meeting were approved.

2. Public Comments:

3. Staff Updates/ Informational Items

- **Status on Tree City USA and proposed new Specimen Trees:** The City has submitted the paperwork. Kate is going to update a Tree City USA display consisting of three plaques with annual stickers for each year of participation. The Specimen Trees resolution will go to the City Council work session this week, and likely be voted upon on Jan. 28. Kate also followed up on two items in Big Chimney Park. She has confirmed that the soil and vegetation remediation area (for stormwater management) will be outside the tree preservation area. There is currently no budget for signs explaining the stormwater management aspect of the park. Recs and Parks has a limited budget that will cover historical and park signs.
- **Bacterial Leaf Scorch of red oaks – epidemic in Falls Church:** There are approximately 200 affected oaks, and existing funding to treat approximately 20. The trees that are most robust (primarily in the medians and on Hillwood Ave.) are likely to be chemically treated. Kate and Charles will propose a specific plan for request of funds to City Council. Funds requested may be used for West Broad treatment and/or replacement with more heat- and disease-tolerant trees. Karen will draft an informational article on leaf scorch and will try to have it published in the News-Press.
- **Ongoing development plans:** Kate has requested native plant substitutes for several plants in the Downtown Plaza. The TC voted to recommend a sugar maple in the right section of the plaza.

4. Current Business

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- **Tree of the Year selection:** The TC voted to select the Loblolly Pine as Tree of the Year.
- **Changes to Tree Commission – name and structure:** Kate researched the background on membership numbers and names of City Boards and Commissions. It's understood that a "Commission" is a body with a specific function (as opposed to a "Board" with legal review purposes, a "Council" with a broader focus, or a limited-term "Working Group"), so the City Clerk recommended that the TC retain "Commission" in its name. In light of this, the TC voted to change the name of the TC to the "Urban Forestry Commission." The City Code will need to be amended with the new name. The TC also discussed the frequent difficulty in reaching a quorum for votes and the feasibility of an alternate on the Commission. The TC voted in favor of adding one alternate to the Commission. This change will also require an amendment to the Code. Kate will start the amendment process with the City Clerk.
- **Environmental Chapter of City Comprehensive Plan: Tree canopy/green space goals:** Kate handed out a draft of the Natural Resources and Environmental Chapter. TC members will review and provide comments.

5. Plan Reviews

- **George Mason High School site plan submission 1:** The TC reviewed the submission and will support Staff's request for revised plans that show individual trees to be removed and protected as well as any overhead wires, underground lines and geothermal facilities that could interfere with tree plantings. The developer will also need to request a waiver of the Code's interior parking lot landscaping requirements in order to achieve its parking goals. The TC recognizes that the overall proposed canopy coverage exceeds 20%, and there will be overall species diversity onsite.

6. Future Business

- **Future of green space associated with Special Exception projects**
- **Tree Commission name change**
- **Code updates/modifications relating to urban forestry**
- **Standard private maintenance agreements for streetscapes**
- **Urban Forest Management Plan**
- **Enforcement of site plan tree violations**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Staff liaison: Kate Reich, 703-248-5183, kreich@fallschurchva.gov

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