

CHARLOTTESVILLE TREE COMMISSION

March 5, 2024

Meeting Minutes

5:00 – 7:00 pm

Attendees:

- MaKshya Tolbert
- Susan McKinnon
- Steve Gains
- Tyler Miller
- Holly Lafferty
- Donna Shaunesey
- Woody Parish

Missing:

- Eric Bredder
- Manuel Landau
- Jeff Atewn
- JD Brown
- Jean Sebeok

(1) MaKshya: Moves to accept minutes from March Meeting.

- Donna seconded and accepted.

(2) Brief Introduction for 3 visitors

- Steve Gains - Arborist
- Holly Lafferty
- Donna Shaunesey
- Tyler Miller
- MaKshya Tolbert
- Susan McKinnon

(3) Staff Report Update from Steve:

(a) Budget update. We got the money that we asked for last year.

(b) Wants to compete for more grants.

(i) If we have more infrastructure in place we will be

(c) Forest Service Grant Components (For Grant We have):

(i) Tree Canopy Analysis: How quickly are we losing or gaining canopy

(ii) On the ground systematic inventory. Species, Age, Number, etc.

- (iii) Training the Public re: stewardship.
- (iv) Grant Changes:
 - 1) Original a 5 year grant - when the consultants that are helping administer the grant (which is also new) they wrote our timeline for us - and it was a 2 year application of the grant. We got it extended to 3 years, so that is how long we have to administer it.
 - a) Steve is NOT the line item person on this grant - Crystal is.
 - b) Steve has a draft RFP he needs to talk to Crystal about.
- (d) Discussed Wolf/Josey completed meetings/discussions with Community/Staff Steering Committees as part of the process to create a Downtown Mall Tree Management Plan. Plan should be completed by summer 2024.
 - (i) Leaning towards block by block approach.
 - (ii) The idea is that we start in the worst area (cluster of 7 near escape room) (Islands of trees called bosques)
 - (iii) MaKshya: Is the desire to spread it out to not impact businesses?
 - 1) Steve: There are a range of reasons - utilities, not taking all the shade out at once.
 - 2) One of Halprin's designers was aghast about the fact that the trees hadn't been replaced yet.
 - (iv) Invasive Control, Etc.
 - 1) Things are going according to plan.
 - 2) Finished pretty much all of the forest re-mulching.
 - 3) A lot of trash near Oak Grove cemetery.
 - 4) Finished John Warner Parkway.
 - 5) Others Oak Street, Quarry Park
 - 6) Quarry Park is also done re: invasive.. Should be planting there next week.
 - (v) Had a good planting with the Lorax society and with CATS at forest hills.
 - (vi) Tree planting contractor that did spring and fall planting last year will be back next year to replace those that died, Steve will also do some as well. He prefers fall planting but some spaces need to be filled.
 - (vii) Steve will be getting a seasonal employee.
 - 1) 2 people interested.

- (viii) RFP for a Sawmill - contractors on site. Good plans and a few connections. This would be a city sawmill vs. a UVA sawmill. Steve: My plan is set up an LLC to do the sawmill. My thinking is that it would be a number of people with a broad range of interests.
 - 1) MaKshya: Do you think there would be more interest for general milled wood than there was for the mall wood?
 - a) Steve: Maybe, hard to say.
- (ix) Envirathon: Some interest in starting.
 - 1) Starts in middle schools. Earth sciencey student competition and travel to competitions.
 - 2) Steve has been involved more than once.
 - 3) There trivia and aspects of identification and tool use.
 - 4) Steve starting talking with teachers at Western Albemarle High School and Albemarle High School.
- (x) We'd been working with the center for urban habitats to make a trail to freebridge from ?. Lined with QR codes that will tell you about the plants along the trail - this should be up in the next week or so.
 - 1) There are a number of these postings on Susans property lol
 - 2) Meadow creek is being mapped this week.
 - 3) Next year the plan will be to be there earlier.
- (xi) Earth Day Project (April 20th) - Dealing with Invasives at 0 East High Street.
 - 1) Susan: Is there going to be herbicide application?
 - a) Steve: Depending on how much work we can get done, etc.
 - b) Steve: RCA ran into road-blocks training folks how to remove invasives. Issues with credit assigned, etc.
 - c) The Virginia Department of Agriculture is the certifying organization. Private land is functionally different.

(e) New Commissioner intros:

- (i) Woody Parish:
 - 1) Architect at Mitchell Matthews.
 - 2) Been here on and off since 1977.
 - 3) Interested in working against invasives.
 - 4) Lives in Locust meadows - they hired a company (Ginger something) to cut vines, etc.
 - 5) Steve: Your company and its development practices are one of the reasons in particular why you stood out in your application. Particularly with affordable housing, etc.

- (4) CATS Arbor Day event at the Dawn Redwood at Pen Park on 4/26 @ 10AM.
- (a) The Dawn Redwood was the only one with needs - has Ivy going up it.
 - (b) MaKshya advocated for the pen park location for a variety of reasons.
 - (c) The Dept. of Forestry is there, a plaque, and we commemorate the tree.
 - (d) This is our 18th year - and part of the effort to become a Tree City USA.
 - (e) The talk about this history of Arbor Day too.

- (5) New Old Business: State of the Forest (Our Annual Report):

- (a) MaKshya and Tyler gave the report.
- (b) Feedback, Debrief, thoughts on last night, etc.

- (6) Also Discussed Priorities:

- (a) We have other things that we might be able to do to support the efforts of the other partner organizations.
- (b) In reporting out that brainstorming of priorities Maybe it makes more sense to do it next month - otherwise we'll just have the same conversation again and again. MaKshya will share the spreadsheet after this.
- (c) Susan: We wanted to ask if we have the right division of subcommittees and whether they're doing what they need to do or what we want them to do and whether they serve our needs.

- (7) MaKshya will send out all of the required info for new people**

- (8) One-on-Ones with new people.**

- (a) MaKshya and Susan

- (9) A group calendar so that everyone has access to it and know when deadlines are.**

- (a) Google Calendar.
- (b) Something we all have access to, etc.

- (10) Susan Has a Question: Steve, do you have staff support at all?**

- (a) Steve: Yea I think so, to some degree
- (b) Because it's written into article 6 that staff will be assigned to us. Some kind of staff support. A different section than the one in which Steve is discussed.
- (c) Chris Gensic is over extended.
- (d) Rob can do some organizational stuff, and Steve's boss can do some.