

CHARLOTTESVILLE TREE COMMISSION

October 1, 2024

5:00 – 7:00pm

In-Person Meeting – Parks and Recreation Office (Downtown Mall, Adjacent to Parking Garage)

Present:

Steve Gaines (SG)

Tyler Miller (TM)

Shanti Levy (SL)

Holly Lafferty (HL)

Donna Shaunesey (DS)

JD Brown (JB)

Manuel Lerdau (ML)

Woody Parrish (WP)

Susan McKinnon (SM)

Call to Order and Approval of September Minutes

5:00–5:10

Minutes approved.

Staff Report (S. Gaines)

5:10–5:30

- Update RFP for Downtown Tree Replacement Plan – Plans are moving forward with financing. First projects will be making fountains accessible and 3rd street (side street). *RFP has gone through all meeting processes with city groups and approvals in place. First targeted actions include side projects – 3rd street and fountains until the rest of the funding is in place*
- City of Charlottesville awarded Inflation Reduction Act Grant. City Staff is in active negotiations with winning bidder. *In contact with 3 bidders. EO Scene out of Ohio is leader. Came in below the other bidders and a few additional scope elements have been added a la carte. Hope to have all of the agreements in place by the end of the month.*
- Continued work on Invasive Plant Control/Containment Strategy on City Properties. Properties considered for next round of mulching and/or goats include:
 - Butterfly Greenway (12.56 acres). *This will be the only place where mulching where occur. Below where mulching took place before. Not complete 12.56 area will be mulched.*
 - Meadow Creek Disc Golf (4.32 acres). *Near Bodo's. Primarily cutting vines and spraying.*
 - Sherwood Road entrance to Green Leaf Park (.5 acres). *Kudzu in trees will be focus, mostly spray job.*

- *Rest of work will be maintaining areas cleared to date. Total area getting to 40 acres.*
- Charlottesville Invasive Plant Partnership will be targeting 5 neighborhoods/HOAs in Charlottesville – details in Education/Outreach. *SM will talk about later in meeting.*
- RFQ to install 133 trees around the city limits, focus on Rights of Way, highway interchanges.

Going out today, 10/1, approval should be in two weeks. Hope to have all trees planted by 12/20.

Past work: 1300 trees have been planted, about ½ have died. Parks & Rec checking all of tree tubes and locating how many died and need replacement. 50% mortality not great but not terrible.

- ReLeaf Cville will be doing a major planting in the Woolen Mills – Will be planting 20-30 trees in Riverview Park, Meade Park, and ROWs in the Woolen Mills neighborhood. *Mix of public and private properties. Question: is Releaf coordinating with restoration work at Riverview? Yes. Rivanna Conservation Alliance is also doing a riparian project RE bank stabilization along that side of the park that this work dovetails with.*
- Charlottesville Parks and Recreation awarded “Best New Environmental Sustainability Initiative” project/award at the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society Conference – this was for the forest restoration/invasive control projects on city property. *Kudos!!*

Discussion on Staff Report

5:30–5:40

New/Old Business:

5:40–5:50

- Work Session: Waiting for Sanders response
MT, relayed via TM – decision to delay the request until content is more developed and coordinated.
- Brian Pinkston: Opportunities for connection?
Keith Pitchford invited Brian Pinkston and any other City Councilors to walk in Charlottesville to better understand condition of the canopy, why canopy is at risk. Hoping to lead walk at 2nd St. Keith to manage next steps on this effort.

Committee Reports + Action Items

5:50–6:50

- Arbor Committee – 20 minutes
Resolution for all public trees to have preservation status; Do we revise ordinance to include all public trees, add “all city trees” to NDS updates.
SG: Will not be something we decide but rather will be put in Tree Ordinance. Not sure about the status.
DS: is this something we want to talk about in the work session or is this a separate issue?
JB: Clarify what status these would be?
SG: It would be a shortcut to nomination and would be designated as street tree. Interest at the NDS level. Would be any street tree. Movement to add it to the work session with the city. James Freas at NDS has been in support of this endeavor.
 - Tree Conservation: spreadsheet follow-up. Comprehensive tree list has been updated with groundcovers.
 - In discussions with Fifeville leadership team about tree talks, no updates. *SL: meeting scheduled for late October.*
- Education & Advocacy – 20 minutes
 - CHIPP (Charlottesville Invasive Plants Partnership) Coalition update.
 - *SM: Neighborhoods have quarterly meeting with Sam Sanders. CHIPP shared a presentation RE value of mature trees, threats of invasive vines, goal to build neighborhood-based coalitions to remove vines and build*

awareness. 5 neighborhoods expressed interest in participating: Johnson Village, Lewis Mountain, Kellytown/Rugby Heights, Little High, North Downtown.

- Sent out an email and a questionnaire to ask basic questions about the neighborhood and invasive plants and to arrange an initial meeting to learn what they are interested in RE invasives in their neighborhood.
 - Have received some responses already
- Thinking of these as pilot projects to figure out what works
- Really need help - many people to get it up and running and create infrastructure to mobilize interest into action – TC members and any other interested people Meeting this Thursday 10/3 3:30-5.
- WP: interested in HOAs embedded in neighborhoods.
- Multiple other organizations participating in this RCA, CATS
- Intention to create a regular monthly meeting

– Website

– SM: would like feedback on the general categories primarily.

I&I are up because they describe what the TC actually does.

- *II: we are supposed to be advising CC and PC. We can't put documents up here that are not also up elsewhere on the City's website. Codes work or letter RE 0 High St, for example.*
- *SG: If the documents we hope to put on the website are included in the agenda or minutes, these would already be public documents, so these documents could be included. Support for including these documents. Worth thinking about what should be included, SG will come up with a list and try to find the relevant documents. SM: When we produce documents for CC, or PC, we have to make an effort to append these documents to our agenda and/or minutes.*
- *TM: worth having a record of our suggestions to Planning Commission even if they are ignored.*

- TM (general comment):

- *length of titles should be shorter for web purposes.*
- *RE codes, include some description, but direct links to the relevant codes*

- Section on advocacy:

- *Discussion on how much to stress "native" trees.*
- *Worth discussing other options for reaching out to the city if you are interested in getting a tree planted on your property*
- *Support for idea of including a link to information on how to plant and care for a tree. The city has a standards and design manual that is boring and potentially outdated. We can do better. A video might be the best bet. DOF has a good link describing how to plant.*
- *TM: Possible not to just list the ways one can get involved but a form that could be populated or an email directed to the right person? SG: city has a mechanism for mobilizing volunteers, but it doesn't work well. Best choice might be to link to other organizations.*
- *SL: perhaps useful to group the categories into fewer larger umbrella categories 1) What TC does in terms of advocacy with the city 2) protecting our canopy 3) Get involved, including planting*

● Codes and Practices –

- *TM: presentation on stormwater utility fee as a program (went into effect in 2014) that has potential to be an access way into the current codes to preserve more trees. See presentation document.*
 - *Potential for encouraging change on lots that have a high percentage of impervious surfaces should be target. All are non-residential uses. Intention would be to target parking lots. Recommends:*
 - *Scaling based on the percent coverage of the lot. Add to formula for calculating fee, a multiplier for the percentage of impermeable surface on a lot.*
 - *Discussion of critiques – exemption for lots under a certain size proposed as a way of mitigating the regressive nature of the tax*
 - *Recommendation to make presentation as visually accessible as possible.*
 - *Discussion of variable ways of proposing adjustments to the way the calculation takes place, whether it should only apply to commercial land uses*
 - *Can the use of the money be targeted toward green infrastructure? Can it make sense to add Steve's office to utilities or another arborist for NDS so that these funds could be used to support urban canopy and permeability. Circular feedback of funds.*
 - *SM: if the intent is to get developments to plant trees and implement improved parking lots, would it be helpful to include images of appealing alternatives to the traditional parking lot.*
 - *Discussion: as a back door into protecting larger trees, only works if the rate for removing larger trees is large enough to truly work as an incentive. WP: at what point does the fee become too punishing?*
 - *SG clarification: with CC, idea is not to present fully baked alternative, but present an invitation to work together toward a better solution.*
 - *JB: comparison of rates charged by other municipalities. Challenging because the mechanism for charging is different for each locality.*
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- *Work session: 4 topics to be included:*
 - *Review Tree Conservation Ordinance*
 - *Tree removal permit – staff shortage to properly review requests for tree removal*
 - *Critical slopes: CC has approved every waiver so far*
 - *Stormwater fee revision proposal*

Items/Announcements Not on Agenda/Action Items for Next Meeting

6:45–6:50

- *Continued comments on website file*
- *Status on the State of the Forest? Current thinking on timeframe?*
 - *Suggestion from Michael Payne for it to be January, needs to be reviewed prior, such that it needs to be written next month*
 - *Subcommittee: Tyler, Donna and Susan.*
 - *Idea is that SOF covers other topics than those presented in the work session.*
- *Next meeting is election day. SG to look into proper method for changing date.*

General Public Comment

6:50

Adjourn

7:00

(t) At the discretion of the Chair, public comments related to particular agenda items may be solicited at that point in the meeting. This virtual/electronic meeting is open to the public. You may participate electronically by registering at <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1077/Agendas-Minutes> or via telephone by using the number provided with the Zoom registration. Or you may contact staff at 434-970-3182 to receive the dial in number. In addition to the Zoom webinar, this meeting will be available on the City's streaming platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and www.charlottesville.gov/streaming.

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