

CHARLOTTESVILLE TREE COMMISSION

December 3, 2024

5:00–7:00pm

Present: Susan McKinnon, Betsy Roettger, Donna Shaunesey, Tyler Miller, JD Brown, Shanti Levy, Manuel Lerda, Steven Gaines, Katie (Deputy, Parks & Recreation), and Rian Anthony.

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

Call to Order and Approval of November Minutes (*M. Tolbert*)
5:10pm

5:00–

Staff Report (*S. Gaines*)

5:10–5:30pm

- Update RFP for Downtown Tree Replacement Plan – Plans have concluded, can forward links to plan for interested Tree Commissioners.
Wolf Josey has been paid, City Council is aware of plans and we aren't sure yet about approval and/or payment for Phase I. Currently, Plan is looked upon as favorable, and how to pay is still being determined. There is no need for formal approval of this Plan. Steve can share the document through a link with Tree Commissioners. Parks & Rec is also working with Wolf/Josey to get an executive summary of the plan. Scope was to give formal recommendation and Wolf/Josey has given their formal recommendation. It's great to have a plan. Now Parks & Recreation has to work on an implementation strategy (aka finding money for the project). \$350,000 for early Phase I work has been sought out via CIP. And fingers crossed that we get ~\$2M VA250 grant.
- Continued work on Invasive Plant Control/Containment Strategy on City Properties. Mulching at Butterfly Greenway (approximately 9 acres) will begin Dec 2 – Dec 13. Vine treatments at Disc Golf Course and Sherwood Avenue have been concluded. Tree plantings to replace trees in mulched areas will start early December.
Mulching began 12/2/2024 on Butterfly Greenway. Just about done with a big patch of Bradford Pear. Best times to come out, if interested, are later in the week. If interested, Steve and Carolyn (Parks & Rec) will be there, and can park on Melbourne and walk up to the Greenway. Each track Steve is working on has a DNP (Do Not Proceed) and that'll serve as placeholder when money runs out and more is needed. Steve is taking pictures.

Vines near Disc Golf Course have been severed and treated. Steve had a lot more planned for the Fall but first frost requires some adjustment of plans. All

areas will have mulching and tree replacement either this Fall or this coming Spring.

- RFQ to install 133 trees around the city limits, focus on Rights of Way, highway interchanges – Installations to begin mid December, will conclude early January. 133 Trees going in: will start in the middle of December; same contractor as last year (Jarema Landscapes)
- ReLeaf Cville will be doing a major planting in the Woolen Mills – Will be planting 10-15 trees in Meade Park, and ROWs in Woolen Mills neighborhood. Finishing up planting trees now, around 90 trees on private property. 2"-caliper trees from ReLeaf. Things are going well.
- Discussions with Eocene are going well. Currently looking at timing for Tree Canopy analysis and volunteer training (these are the first priorities regarding our schedule for the Urban Forest Management Plan).

Things are going well: Next meeting is this Friday. Need to figure out when and how to project data for tree canopy analysis; then discuss training plan(s) for volunteers. Plan is for vegetative analysis to happen in the Spring or in the Fall.

Curiosity from commissioners re: process:

- More or less: uniform survey with samples taken at points across city; species composition, native/invasive canopy assessment, different height levels. Right now our canopy assessment doesn't take enough into account: this is an attempt to ground-truth our inventory.
- Updates from Rian
Rian updates: In January, we set the calendar. That's crucial for this group to take notes. Bylaws state a minimum of four meetings. Next meeting, we'll have to discuss whether to reduce the # of meetings. This is a good time to set the calendar, much like the City Council does re: Election Day.

In January, Steve will facilitate elections for a new Chair and Vice Chair. After that, a new Chair can take over. New Chair will facilitate meeting, and work with Vice Chair to approve 2025 calendar.

In terms of virtual meetings, Tree Commission should use time in January to discuss virtual meetings. And get that approved. There is an avenue for remote options for board members but a policy is required. Entire meeting cannot be virtual. BUT individual members can get approval for virtual meetings. Rian could send us PC documents. Max of 2 times per year per person.

State of the Forest: NDS/Parks & Rec putting in a request for a second Urban Forester. New positions will basically be private trees: developers, permitting, and projects on private property.

Discussion on Staff Report

5:30–5:40pm

Committee Reports + Action Items

5:40–6:00pm

- Arbor Committee
 - Update: Oak Lawn “Walk Shop”
- Codes and Practices
 - Update: Stormwater work session
 - Stormwater-wise: Open data for city is slowly starting to incorporate new zoning designations, so Tyler has been re-doing all of his analysis to include that. But at least the zoning will be correct and not use the old system. Because there are so many permutations of what that can look like (changing the fee), Tyler built a chatbot where you can basically ask it any question you want.
- Education & Advocacy
 - Update: CHIPP Report out on neighborhood walks
 - Have now done 2 walks: Kellytown and Little High. CHIPP walked with residents in Kellytown: three walkers guided them, all from Amherst, VA. Kellytown has 3 HOAs with continuous forest sprawling with trees + vines. Folks experienced with ‘invasives management’ and interested in being part of pilot program. They have block captains and we plan to all meet in January to discuss next steps. They’re interested in neighborhood-level surveys and in being trained re: invasive removals and control. Again we’re looking at a site with steep and critical slopes, lots of need and opportunity for riparian corridors covered with invasives.
 - Little High: Steve joined, as well as a couple CATS members. Tim Maywalt had shared a video at Kellytown that wasn’t available at Little High. Walk involved a bit more of an introductory language re: CHIPP. Getting real interest out of people to deal with invasives. Plan is to meet next month with Little High, too. No block captains. Slowly building but getting good reception.
 - Update: Urban Wood Network/Sawmill Report
 - Red Hill: share an update?
 - Steve was approached by teachers at Red Hill Elementary about plantings, projects, and urban wood. They’re building an obstacle course. Steve connected some dots and got Eric involved. Harrisonburg has a very active urban wood project, and made some major contributions. Since it’s in the County, Steve isn’t all that involved. All those efforts are good for our future efforts, as far as the future of urban wood goes.
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- Building a Tree Commission Document Archive for website
 - Documents are in November minutes, were approved this meeting.
 - VA250/DHR Grant Fund Application Letter of Support
 - 0 High Street
 - Azalea Springs

New/Old Business: FY24 State of the Forest (draft)

6:00–6:50pm

- Recruitment: Considering people across our networks
 - MT took over late. There's an ongoing lack of respect and process that puts chair in a weak position. Vacancies and transition of commission leadership and recent resignations are coming up. Some frustration regarding inefficiencies. For next year: committees, agendas for those committees, schedules, dates
- Revisiting bylaws in January 2025: input?
- SOTF Feedback: input on draft

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

General Public Comment

6:50–7:00pm

Adjourn

7:00pm

(†) 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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