

CHARLOTTESVILLE TREE COMMISSION MINUTES

November 11, 2025

5:00 – 7:00 pm

In-Person Meeting – Parks and Recreation Office

Commissioners in attendance:

Susan McKinnon, Chair

Shanti Levy, Vice Chair

JD Brown

Hannah Brown

Worthy Martin

Shea Wales

MaKshya Tolbert

Betsy Roettger

Commissioners not in attendance:

2 vacant positions

Tyler Miller

Woody Parrish

City:

Steve Gaines - Urban Forester, Charlottesville Parks and Rec

Call to Order (*S. McKinnon*)

Approval of August and September Minutes (*S. McKinnon*)

- Edit for September minutes – add Shea Wales as in attendance
- September and October minutes approved

Staff Report and Discussion (*S. Gaines*)

Urban Forest Management Plan – Update

- Parks and Recreation will continue working with Eocene Environmental Consultants to compose an up-to-date Urban Forest Management plan.
- The plan will include a canopy survey and vegetation analysis
- Anticipated timeline is 1 to 1.5 years
- Survey will be circulated for public input

Invasive Plant Control Update

- Rx Fire continuing treatments on all management units.
- Mulching to begin late November/early December.
- Tree seedling installations late December/early January.
- All management plans are available on TEAMS.
- Focus on removal of vines on trees (Route 250), mulching (Riverview, Butterfly Greenway)

Tree Planting Fall 2025

- Request for Quote (RFQ) is active, hope to have contractor onboard and planting December 2025/January 2026.
- Watering contract to be in place by early spring
- 119 trees will be planted, mostly on school grounds and in rights-of-ways

Downtown Mall Trees

- Parks and Recreation will be performing annual tree work in January 2026.
- Two tree walks with only a few attendees
- One removal (outside of Parks and Rec office) – no replacement for the tree until a plan is in place for replacement along the entire mall

Zoning Inspector Position

- Interviews concluded 10/28/2025

Virginia Recreation and & Park Society Award 2025

- Charlottesville Parks and Recreation received The Best Sustainable Environmental Program Award – Roanoke, VA Conference.
- Award for QR code guided plant tour

City Advisory Boards

- Charlottesville City Managers recently announced the new public-facing Boards and Commissions website: <https://boards.charlottesville.gov/>

New/Old Business

- Shift from committee approach to focus on workgroups organized around initiatives
- Committee members invited to create initiatives

Initiatives Discussions

- Debriefing and discussion of Tree Preservation Packet outline (*JD Brown, S. Gaines*)
 - Outline for tree preservation guide that can be shared with developers as an initial element of site plan
 - Outputs: As a handout + available online
 - Action item: JD to share current outline integrated with Steve's – ask for responses by Dec 2 meeting
- Discussion of Vulnerable Sites Initiative (*S. Levy, S. Gaines*)
 - Effort to highlight critical parcels for future purchase or heightened scrutiny during the development review process
 - Correlation of areas with existing protection (flood plains, steep slopes) with existing canopy coverage
 - Need to connect for density – focus on cluster development in areas with intact canopy
 - Future goal to assess the ecological value of sites
- Presentation of Canopy Collective priorities (*S. Levy*)
- CHIPP Update (*S. McKinnon, W. Parrish, W. Martin*)
- Other initiatives?
 - Update to comprehensive tree list, which guides developer site plan selection – 1-year warranty for newly planted trees
- Discussion of what to include in SOTF report (*All*)
 - Elements to include/Action items and assignments
 - Executive summary
 - Steve's introduction letter (Steve)
 - CHIPP update (Susan)
 - Garrett St packet and response
 - Vulnerable parcel identification (Shanti)

- Recruitment
- Reiterate stormwater fee
- Planting numbers (Steve)
- Removals (Steve)
- Recommendations
- Invasives
- Canopy collective (Shanti)
- Work on tree preservation guide for the development committee (JD)
- Timeline
 - Feedback on elements by Dec 2 meeting (tree preservation guide)
 - Rough data (from Steve) by Dec 2
 - Outline for SOTF by Dec 2
 - First draft of text by Jan 6 meeting
 - Report completion date Monday, Feb 2
 - Request the earliest meeting date available based on the Feb 2 submission

Administrative Updates and Discussion

- Update and follow-through on Tree Commission Recruitment (*All*)
 - Open(ing) positions
 - Review criteria on new Boards & Commissions directory website
 - Create new content for Tree Commission site in Urban Forestry for 1st quarter applications (Susan)
 - Create new recruitment brochure—with Ose’s recs (Hannah and Shanti)
- Teams access
 - Steve to resend invites to everyone
- By-law revisions need to be completed and posted
 - Timing of officer elections
 - Addition of CATS criteria

General Public Comment

- None

Adjourned at 7pm