

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	March 6, 2023
Action Required:	Approve wood donation by motion
Presenter:	Steven Gaines, Urban Forester
Staff Contacts:	Steven Gaines, Urban Forester
Title:	Approving disposition of wood from Downtown Mall trees

Background

Parks and Recreation removed 9 hazard trees from Charlottesville's Downtown Mall January 10-20, 2023. The wood (22 sawlogs and additional wood segments) has been stored at the Community Lab School (Albemarle County Public Schools) since the conclusion of the operation. Parks and Recreation hopes to donate the wood to the Charlottesville Downtown Association and the Community Lab School so that the wood can get sawn into rough lumber, dried in a solar kiln, and fashioned into wood products that will benefit the city (benches for downtown mall, bus stops, etc.). The City's Procurement Office has assessed the wood at \$300 and will likely auction the wood pieces as firewood if it remains in city ownership. Parks and Recreation seeks approval from City Council to donate the wood so it can be recycled for future use.

Discussion

Parks and Recreation wishes to donate the wood to the Downtown Business Association and the Community Lab School. The Community Lab School is part of the Albemarle County Public School System and works closely with the UVA School of Architecture. If approved, the wood will be processed (milled into rough lumber and dried in a solar kiln) by the Community Lab School, and lumber assigned to local craftspeople via the Downtown Business Association. The City's Procurement Office has appraised the wood at \$300 for auction price and has suggested that the donation of this wood is the most productive outcome from the tree removals.

Charlottesville Parks and Recreation performed tree work on Charlottesville's Downtown Pedestrian Mall on January 10 – 20, 2023. The City's tree work contractor (Big O Tree and Lawn) worked efficiently to prune deadwood out of all the mall trees and removed nine (9) standing trees. All of the usable wood from the project (including sawlogs, large branches, and union pieces) has been saved from the project.

As Phase I of the project (tree work/removals) has been completed, Phase II will be utilizing the leftover wood. As the trees are historic, there has been quite a lot of interest from local craftspeople to turn the wood into usable products that will be recycled back into the mall (either as fixtures on the mall such as benches/tables) or to be used to fashion products. Additionally, there are plans to organize a public demonstration where members of the public can visit the work site (Community Lab

School) to observe the wood being milled, turned, and carved.

Most of the wood (22 sawlogs) is currently housed with the UVA Sawmill group at the Community Lab School on Forest Avenue. As seating has been a continuing issue on the mall, there is willingness from local specialists to fashion the rough lumber into benches or other types of seating. The leftover wood (extra sawn lumber boards, branches, trunk unions, or sections of wood too small to be milled) will be used for wood turning and carving projects (making bowls, pens, rolling pins, cutting boards, etc.). The Downtown Association will plan to host a public event to showcase the products and perhaps auction the items off, with generated funds being donated back to the City's Tree Planting Fund. The Community Lab School (UVA Architecture School affiliated) will host demonstrations for the public for observation of the wood being milled with a portable bandsaw, turned into wood lathes, and carved by local craftspeople on a specified future date(s).

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

Green City, Applications of Climate Action Plan – This effort will help educate the public on natural resources management and recycling of wood materials.

Community Engagement

The Community Lab School plans to host demonstration days in which the public will be invited to observe the wood being worked (milled, turned, carved) by local specialists. The Downtown Business Association plans to host a public event to showcase any and all fashioned products created from the mall tree wood.

Several members of the public have offered their expertise to help with woodworking projects. Overall objectives for the wood involve the construction of benches to be used as seating for the downtown mall. There has been discussion of showcasing fashioned wood products at a public event or auction – if this does occur, generated funds will likely be donated to the Tree Planting Fund for Charlottesville's Parks and Recreation Department.

Budgetary Impact

Report only, no budget impact.

Recommendation

Approval of Wood Donation to the Charlottesville Downtown Association and Community Lab School (Albemarle County Public Schools/UVA Architecture School)

Alternatives

Allow wood to stay in City Ownership and be auctioned off as firewood

Attachments

None