

## Tree Commission

### September 2020 Minutes

**Date:** September 23, 2020

**Time:** 5:00PM – 7:00PM

**Location:** Remotely via Zoom meeting

**Attending:** Paul Josey, Emily Cone-Miller, Brian Menard, Anson Parker, Tim Padalino, Mark Zollinhofer, Mark Rylander, Lynn Rush, Peggy Van Yahres, Jeff Pacelli, Jody Lahendro,

**Absent:** Jeff Jennings

**Staff:** Mike Ronayne, Todd Brown, Missy Creasy

**Guests:** Carolyn Burgess, Michelle Cormier, Roxanne White

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

#### **September Minutes Corrections –**

Tim motions to approve the minutes without correction, and Paul seconds. None opposed.

#### **Annual Calendar/Other items – Brian M.**

October 6<sup>th</sup> City Council will meet to discuss boards and commissions moving forward. Brian and Peggy will attend and report back to the commission in October. Other Annual Calendar items will be moving forward as remote meetings are expected to continue. The commission will look to migrate Roxanne's Google Docs for new members online in a dropbox for agendas and documents. Other online visibility issues exist on the City's new website but are being worked through.

#### **Stribling Av. Comments – Paul, Jody**

The commission provided comments to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed development at the end of Stribling Avenue. There were concerns over tree protection particularly regarding Moore's Creek along. Comments were well received by the Planning Commission.

## **Member Reports**

### **Annual Report Charts and Metrics – Peggy**

Peggy reviews the new charts that reflect FY 2020's metrics that will be used in the Annual State of the Forest presentation to Council. There were a couple changes proposed for the charts moving forward were to track planting locations by neighborhood or low canopy neighborhood. There is some discussion where planting trees on the golf course should fall into the list of priorities. The committee hopes to draft the narrative for the charts for next month's meeting. Members will submit comments to Peggy.

### **Tree Nominees for Conservation– Peggy**

Peggy reviews the tree conservation ordinance and history. There were 6 trees nominated earlier this year but the process was tabled prior to the pandemic. Another 20 trees were discussed surrounding Friendship Court and 6 large elms on E. High St. for consideration. The intention is to pass the first 6 trees this year and the remaining 20 trees early next year.

### **Master Tree List Update – Paul**

Paul provides an update on the Master Tree List and how this document is used. Some changes have been made to reflect changes in industry trends and reduce complexity of all the different cultivars. Mike will review and other members will submit comments to Paul.

### **Annual Tree Planting List and Schedule – Mike**

Mike reviews the process used to create a ranking system for tree planting locations based on different criteria and feedback from the Tree Commission. The ranking system seems to reflect the needs of the community and may be adjusted in the future as needs change. Mike will update and provide the tree planting prioritization rubric which this list was based from.

### **FY 2022 Operating Budget – Mike**

Mike reviews how the operating budget was spent in FY 2020. Approximately a third was spent on tree pruning, another third on tree removal, about 20% on storm damage and the remaining on other items and stump grinding. In FY 2022 Mike expects to spend about the same for removals and pruning since those categories do not change as much from year to year. However, storm damage and the "other" category are more subject to vary from year to year.

### **Mall Tree Study Update – Mike**

Last year at a staff meeting it was decided to separate the Mall Tree Study from the Cultural Landscape Study since the two items clearly have different needs. Staff is looking for guidance from City Management on this item. Mike will schedule a time to meet with the new acting City Manager in the coming weeks to address this.

## **Public Comment**

Michelle Cormier asked why there was not more emphasis on planting pines in our parks or other suitable areas. Mike suggested that because pines are more short-lived than some of our oak species that oak may be preferable. There is also a general expectation for oaks in the community and they are durable urban species.

Roxanne White wanted to confirm that London plane trees were on the proposed Master Tree List which they are.

## **Other Items not on agenda**

### **Strategic Plan Update – Peggy**

The first meeting for the Strategic Plan Update will be on the September 29<sup>th</sup> and the committee wants to express the importance of trees and will be drafting an item. Peggy has also attended remote meetings with the NAACP environmental justice committee. Also Peggy, Roxanne and Anson have attended remote meetings with Chesapeake Bay Foundation regarding a project in Richmond and are hoping to learn from that.

### **Carbon Accounting in the Community – Emily Cone-Miller**

Emily and Anson attended the remote meeting for Carbon Accounting led by the Sustainability Dept. The meeting help emphasized the need for a robust inventory of trees planted and removed to really account for carbon emissions.

## **Meeting Action Items:**

- Brian and Peggy will report back from the Council meeting on boards and commissions
- Staff and commission will work to create a workspace for documents and agendas
- Mike will provide the updated financial chart
- Mike and members will review and provide comments for Master Tree List Draft
- Mike will provide an updated rubric used to create the tree planting location ranking system

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.