

Tree Commission

December 2020 Minutes

Date: December 1, 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, Peggy Van Yahres, Jeff Pacelli, Jody Lahendro,

Absent: Jeff Jennings, Lynn Rush

Staff: Mike Ronayne, Matthew Alfele

Guests: Molly Conger

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

October Minutes Corrections –

Under action items, per Mark Rylander

Mark motions to approve minutes with corrections discussed. Peggy seconds, none opposed.

Call to Order and Chair Report– Brian M.

Commission Repository/Workspace Microsoft Teams - The Commission will move forward with setting up a workspace in Microsoft Teams in January. Other members will discuss how receive group participation so things can be cataloged in a thoughtful process.

Strategic Plan Update – The Strategic Plan may be deferred until new City administrators are able to take process forward. December 15th is on City Calendar as tentative.

State of the Forest Report – Presentation has been postponed to January 19th. A draft was sent to commission. Final report will be reviewed at January meeting. Report will need to be sent to clerk by January 8th.

Streetscape Projects – Barracks Rd. was last seen at 60% design drawings with more design to come. Wall locations and heights are to come. E. High St. project had plans approved last October and is in the process of purchasing right-of-way. Planning to start in January and will underground utilities if budget permits.

City Action Climate Plan - Jeff Pacelli has volunteered to serve on the City Action Climate Plan for zoning and is waiting on direction from Susan Elliott.

Annual Calendar and Meeting Schedule – Brian M.

The Annual Calendar and meeting dates are reviewed. The commission expects to meet 11 months out of the year.

Review Data for Annual Report – Peggy

The different charts that demonstrate metrics that will be incorporated into the Annual Report are reviewed. Brian will work with Paul to finalize and add key points over Christmas.

Charlottesville Tree Stewards Annual Report – Mark Z.

Mark reviews activities by CATS despite the pandemic year, with items that happened before the onset of the pandemic along with other adaptations that have kept the organization moving forward. The CATS report is attached.

CIP and OP Budget Update – Mike

Mike reviews some of the changes he made to the two CIP requests moving forward per comments received by the commission last month. Mike will share the proposals with comments reflected. The first opportunity for public input will be January 12th at 6PM via Zoom at the Planning Commission public hearing. There is no update to the Operating Budget process. There were comments about

Fall Tree Planting Update – Mike

The Fall Tree Planting RFQ closed last Friday but will need to be reposted since there was an error in the pricing schedule.

Public Comment

None.

Other Items Not on Agenda

There is discussion as to how Tree Commission may be able to better work with NDS and the site plan review process. Mike will check with new leadership to try to come up with a plan the best way to share site plans or provide feedback. It is suggested an annual lunch exercise with NDS about what they do and how the Tree Commission may be most effective in process.

Meeting Action Items:

- Mike will check with NDS about site plan review process for Tree Commission
- Mike will provide CIP proposals updated with comments
- Brian and Paul will work over Christmas on Annual Report

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

Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards report to the Charlottesville Tree Commission

December 1, 2020

[The following report is a summary of CATS 2020 activities, compiled from the president and the chairs of our standing committees. Submitted to the C'ville Tree Commission by Mark Zollinhofer, CATS liaison member.]

Education Committee, co-chair Tim Maywalt:

The Tree Steward's Education Committee has responsibility for training new tree stewards, providing continuing education opportunities for current tree stewards and educating the public on the value of urban and rural forests. Due to the pandemic, our educational efforts on all three of these fronts shifted from classroom and field settings to online modes using ZOOM meetings and webinars. We have made substantial progress in converting our new 36-hour tree steward training course to online sessions. Our public education classroom sessions have transitioned to online webinars and we are working on virtual tree walks. We also are developing an online OLLI (UVA) session for spring 2021. Safety for the public and our members is our priority, but we are looking forward to getting out in the woods for field training as soon as possible.

Projects Committee, chair Kathy Nepote:

The Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards (CATS), in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been able to have a significant impact on the tree canopy of our community. Prior to the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, we had several large projects with UVA students, these included:

- Jackson Via Elementary School: Cleared debris and invasive vines, trees and bushes from the hillside adjacent to the Student Garden.
- Greenleaf Park: Weeded and mulched the area around the CATS fern garden, which includes native trees and bushes, and extended and mulched a path from the fern garden to the newly installed bridge.
- CATS Grove in McIntire Park: Extended the perimeter around the CATS Grove by removing debris and invasive trees, vines and bushes from the riparian buffer area. Weeded around the planted trees and bushes, mulched, and repaired or replaced wire cages where necessary. We also repaired and mulched the paths that meander through the Grove and, where necessary, pruned trees.
- Jackson Burley Middle School: Removed debris and invasive trees, bushes and vines from along the buffer area between the School's track field and Madison Avenue.

CATS members, in the early spring and this fall, worked on the following:

- John Warner Parkway: We pruned trees at the Rte 250 overpass area and adjacent to the Charlottesville Albemarle Rescue Squad on McIntire Road. Then we pruned the trees along the sidewalk side of the Parkway from the Rte 250 bypass to Melbourne Road, including the area of the Rivanna Trail in front of the Charlottesville High School Stadium.

- Virginia Department of Forestry at Fontaine Park: In the spring, CATS members pruned 80 trees planted on the site. In the spring and later in the fall, we planted 20 more trees on site. Also in the fall, we weeded and mulched all of the trees and where necessary, repaired or replaced the tree cages.
- Ivy Creek Nature Center: In the bird watching area we weeded and mulched two adjacent areas where native trees and bushes had been planted by CATS members and local Cub Scouts. We also replaced tree cages on the latter site.
- Greenleaf Park: Weeded, removed invasive vines and bushes and mulched the fern garden site. Repaired and remulched the paths along the garden and stream.
- Jackson Via Elementary School: Removed some invasive vines and grasses from the hillside and planted 10 trees and bushes.
- CATS Nursery: We potted several hundred trees and bushes to add to the Nursery. In the spring, we had a contactless tree sale for CATS members and sold almost 300 trees and bushes which will be planted locally. The funds generated by the sale will be used to support CATS activities.

Communications Committee, chair Penny Kaiserlian:

CATS' Communications Committee fosters communication among the Association's members and the local community. We currently have 144 active members who have taken the 36-hour training course and who have put in about 4300 volunteer hours so far this year. Members are invited to monthly member meetings to keep up their continuing education about trees and to learn about city initiatives. We also have built a mailing list of over 800 local people who are interested in our activities. These people have purchased trees at our tree sales, interacted with us at table events, come to our free classes, or joined our Tree ID walks. Although CATS has had few in-person events to promote since March, we have kept up our communications to the community and membership through posts on our website, an active Facebook page, and mailings to the promotional list.

Additional note: President Rachel Keen:

In early June the CATS Board learned of a plan to construct a 10-foot wide path down the median of Rt. 20 where it crosses I-64 that would have destroyed about 70 trees in our Gateway project. We called on CATS members to help us save those trees and 24 members wrote to the Board of Supervisors protesting the plan. These letters plus public comments by several CATS members and Paul Josey of the Tree Commission led to the Board of Supervisors unanimously rejecting the bike path proposal in their meeting on June 17.