



Tree Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 16, 2018 ❖ 7:30 - 9:30 pm

George Mason High School Library

Present: Barbara Tesner, John Tesner, Karen Jones, Kate Reich, Dan Sze, Christian Autor

Guests: Kate Walker, Annette Fried

1. **Approval of April Minutes:** The minutes from the April 18, 2018 meeting were approved.
2. **Public Comments: None**
3. **Current Business**
 - **Update of Environmental Chapter of City Comprehensive Plan, including Urban Forestry goals and strategies:** Kate Walker is FCC staff coordinator for the Comprehensive Plan and provided a handout of the slide presentation of the process for the upcoming revision. She explained that the Comprehensive Plan is meant to be the vehicle for the community to express their intent for City actions. Ownership of the Plan rests with the Planning Commission. Ideally the Plan is to be updated every five years, however, the chapter including urban forestry was last updated in 2005. Expectations of the TC include identifying a “vision” for FCC urban forestry; potentially weaving green space and urban forestry together; and developing a Canopy goal or goals. An interesting discussion followed regarding the use of current GIS tools that may be able to define “large” canopy trees. A desired outcome for the June TC meeting would be to define chapter headings (e.g., specimen trees, wood waste, canopy, wildlife habitat, mature trees). The Plan could be the place to discuss tree placement in FC (e.g., rights-of-way; easements, etc.) and to present a comprehensive strategy to address tree coverage not just canopy percentage. The first draft milestone for the Plan will occur before the next TC meeting in June 2018. As a result, Kate R will write the first draft. Discussion of the need for extra meetings ensued but a decision was deferred until the June TC meeting. Observations were offered by Kate W. into the level of effort expended by other Boards and Commissions when their portion of the Comprehensive Plan was updated. Additional discussion occurred regarding the possible use of document sharing tools such as Google Docs.

(UPDATE: The use of Google Docs is not allowed under the Open Meetings guidelines)

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- **George Mason campus project and West Falls Church Development, status of green space expectations:** Proposals for the campus project have been submitted to the City and are available online. The ESC is hosting a panel discussion on May 24 regarding these projects. Observations were offered that TC members may be able to best impact the outcome of these projects by routine attendance at public meetings, being in the community, and getting on other Boards and Commissions agendas (e.g., Parks in July and/or the Transportation Committee) to express TC points of view. At least two public meetings are planned for these projects in the coming months.
- **Proposed Special Exceptions:** Founders Row is coming back to the City Council work session on May 21. Submittals to Boards and Commissions are anticipated by June 11.

4. Staff Updates/ Informational Items

- **Habitat Restoration** – The NOVA Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) grant has been expanded to increase coverage of activities within Crossman Park. This will allow most of Crossman to be cleared at one time. There is some concern for the visual impact that comes with clearing. Citizens near Cavalier Trail were surprised when invasive species clearing occurred near their homes. It was noted that dead ash trees may also be cleared from Crossman and Herman Parks.

5. Plan Reviews

- **Downtown Plaza Site Plan:** New Downtown Plaza plans were reviewed. There will now be 13 parking spaces forfeited (down from 15). Trees are shown in pavement, but will incorporate the use of Silva cells. The use of Silva cells will double the size of the tree pits. The plans appear to incorporate previous TC comments.

6. Future Business

- **Standard private maintenance agreements for streetscapes**
- **Code updates/modifications relating to urban forestry**
- **Tree canopy goals and strategies**
- **Urban Forest Management Plan**
- **Enforcement of site plan tree violations**

Staff liaison: Kate Reich, 703-248-5183, kreich@fallschurchva.gov

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 pm

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