
CITY OF HYATTSVILLE SHADE TREE BOARD

MINUTES | APRIL 1, 2022

PRESENT: Millard Smith, Randy Fletcher,
Taylor Johnson, Zack Dorner

ABSENT: Gloria Felix-Thompson, Keondra Freemyn, Dawn Taft

STAFF: Tara George stood in for Dawn Taft
Hal Metzler stood in for Leslie Riddle

VISITOR(s): Ben Simasek (Ward 3 Council member and Tree Board Liaison)
Danny Schaible (Ward 1 Council member)

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm.

- 1) The minutes from the March 2022 meeting were approved
- 2) Brief report on approved permits, denials, and illegal removals
(Tara George for Dawn Taft)—There were four new permits last month. Two were denied and two were approved. Six outstanding permits from last month were approved. There were ZERO illegal removals.
- 3) Change to the Tree Board Meeting day and time—The discussion to choose a new meeting day and time for the tree board meetings was tabled last month. It is thought that changing the time to a later hour would make attending the meetings more accessible, and possibly encourage more people to participate. The available options for new meeting days are the 1st Friday at 1:30, 1st & 4th Wednesday evening, 1st Thursday evening, and the 1st or 2nd Friday evening. Friday night was not a good option and there was a potential conflict on Thursday evening. Wednesday was the better option and it was decided to stick with the first Wednesday of the month. The new meeting time is 7:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month.

The meetings will remain virtual for the time being. Hal mentioned that the network is being upgraded at the city building and the work should be completed sometime in June. Zach, Randy, Millard (Smitty), and Ben mentioned that they prefer the virtual meetings.

4) Proposed revisions to Chapter 112 Urban Forest

112–3. C No Change

112–3. D Zach motioned that the annual report language be stricken, Smitty seconds, we all agreed. However, we thought it would be useful to have a report by ward (how many trees were removed legally/illegally—perhaps create a simple infograph). The information should be there to present to the City Council. The minutes could be a summarization of the year.

112–3. E Smitty motioned to strike, Zack seconds, we all agreed.

112–4A. We agreed to leave language as written but add (a provision for waiver of replacement upon proof of financial hardship.) I approved, motion carries. We discussed the initiative (Healty trees Hyattsville) to help with funds for trees that have to be removed in a hardship case. Danny mentioned this. Leave the requirement and make a note that it could be waived in times of hardship. Follow up with Dawn. Get more input from her. Hall said that they did include fiscal 23 budget (Healty trees).

112–4B. Zach brought up that he would like to discuss what the application looks like and possibly add subpoints with Dawn’s input. We tabled the discussion until we can discuss with Dawn. At some point we would like to get a copy of the application for review.

112–4C. We discussed the idea of the Tree Board having the discretion to “solicit public opinion” upon an application for a permit. Hal commented that it would be good to keep this incase it’s useful. He specifically mentioned the development at Sacred Heart, and how so many trees were removed. This clause gives the option for public opinion—they can weigh in if/when necessary.

112–4D. We tabled discussion on this clause until we can discuss with Dawn, but it was mentioned that we (the Board) have not been able to check the trees since Covid started. If we keep as is, the language should change. As worded, will it be too much work for the arborist (Smitty)? Taylor mentioned that he brought up the idea of creating a google folder so that Tree Board members would have access to the “sensitive” information on the permits....name/address, etc.

112–4E. Suggested change to the first sentence was approved. Zach motioned to approve, and Smitty seconded the motion. We would, however, like clarification from Dawn on the new text at the end. Expand on (i.e). Zach thought it seems a little informal.

5) New Business—Smitty suggested placing an ad to help entice new tree board members.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.

The next meeting will be held on **WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, AT 7:30 PM.**