

City of Hyattsville Tree Board Meeting Minutes

Friday 7 January 2022

Zoom Meeting
APPROVED 3/4/22

Present: Millard Smith, Gloria Felix-Thompson, Randy Fletcher, Keondra Freemyn, Taylor Johnson

Absent: Zack Dorner

Staff: Dawn Taft, Lesley Riddle

Visitor: Council member Danny Schaible

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 pm.

The minutes from the December meeting were approved.

Ms. Lesley Riddle addressed an email sent around by Council Member Schaible to address the cost of tree removal. Hyattsville has actually been working on this already to create a pool of money for grants that residents can apply for. Healthy Trees Hyattsville has been proposed to help residents care for trees properly and preserve them before needing removal. It will go to the council for approval this spring and would then provide an avenue for residents to apply for help with tree care and removal. Once council approves, we will begin the process of vetting and structuring who is responsible. Gloria received a note from Dr. Waugh to this regard in addition suggesting help with cost of tree replacement. The city is applying for grant funding to plant on private property to help with this as well as additional trees.

Council Member Schaible brought up a request from a citizen who had several large trees with root rot she had to remove and wanted some help. He was thinking about a possible tax rebate/tax credit program to promote healthy tree maintenance. He wondered if this idea has been considered to help with tree care. Ms. Riddle replied Healthy Trees Hyattsville will be created to create an educational program to help citizens understand how to care for their trees as well as potential help in the cost.

Before Ms. Riddle signed off, Gloria commended the staff of DPW for all their hard work these past few days in the snow removal and keeping citizens safe.

The following outstanding permits were discussed:

Last year in 2021, there were 89 permit requests, 74 approved, 5 denied, 10 Not Applicable, 6 illegal removals (one of which we discuss today)

One new permit request just received today. Outstanding to next meeting.

IL21-006 – illegal removal – Ms. Taft suggested waiting until next meeting so she can verify the size. It was a huge tree, in the back yard and may be less than 72”. We are trying to get approval to get on the property to actually view the tree. It is possible the tree is too small to apply to the ordinance. It was already in decline and an arborist may have recommended removal anyhow. We postpone discussion to next month.

Ms. Taft said she expects there will be some new needs in the next few weeks due to the recent snow and weather.

Proposed revisions on Chapter 112-2E

Ms. Taft conferred with colleagues at other departments. All agreed it is hard to prove death of a tree. Takoma Park requires a deposit and if tree survives, the developer gets it back. The other members seemed in favor of a deposit. We postponed further discussion until more research can be completed by the committee. Other communities we might look at: DC, Mount Rainier, Takoma Park, Greenbelt, Edmonston

112-3a: revise to read: term of office of the members appointed shall be at the discretion of the mayor and council. (postpone while Dawn checks with legal)

Remove “caused by death” for vacancies to read “vacancies, resignations...”

New Business:

We must have elections next month for Chair, Secretary, Vice-Chair.

New meeting date and time-postponed to next meeting with new leadership.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30

The next meeting will be 4 February 2022