
CITY OF HYATTSVILLE SHADE TREE BOARD

MINUTES | AUGUST 6, 2025

Present: Zachary Dorner, Gloria Felix-Thompson, Randy Fletcher, John Healy, Dawn Bohls, Kyla Gallagher, Deb Taylor

Absent: Taylor Johnson, Kathryn Kutzner

Staff: Dawn Taft

Visitor(s): Councilmember Emily Strab, Michael Bond, Marshall Marshall

Meeting called to order at 7:35 pm

Approval of the previous July 2025 minutes

July minutes approved

Brief report on approved permits, denials, illegal removals - Dawn Taft

Permits:

- TP25-038 through TP25-040 were approved since our last meeting
- TP25-035, TP25-037 & TP25-041 are still outstanding

Illegal Removals

- IL25-002: 118" double-stemmed Silver Maple which was in good health
 - Discussed if and how much the resident should be fined for the illegal removal
 - The tree board unanimously approved the maximum \$1,000 fine for this illegal removal

Possible next steps and additional discussion:

- Gloria suggested that, if the council passes the new ordinance, a drawing contest be created to get kids to support messaging to families about tree permits
- Emily discussed collaborating with the Hyattsville Life & Times about an ad about tree permitting issues
- Discussed the possibility of the Tree Board recommending postcards or other mailings to residents about tree removal permits
- Deb discussed a multi-pronged approach to communication once the new ordinance passes to inform residents about

Old Business

- **Introduce new City Council Liaison**

Zach introduced Emily Strab as an additional City Council Liaison to the Tree Board. The Tree Board members introduced themselves to Emily.

- **Comms updates**

- No other communication updates until mid-September due to City of Hyattsville communications liaison being out of office until then. John tried to contact the city liaison for the July update, but received an out of office.
- John gave tips as to how to take good pictures for social media, including using the portrait mode on phone cameras to support good quality pictures.
- Dawn Taft suggested that we do communications about proper pruning or mulching techniques.
- The board agreed that getting more information from Dawn Taft about how people can take better care of their trees would be beneficial for social media or other communications posts

- **Shared Google Drive folder for social media pictures**

Zach offered to support in setting up a Google Drive folder for communications so that it is centrally accessible.

- **Talk about how to help the revised tree ordinance through City Council**

- Emily suggested that the tree board send the ordinance to Greg and Emily to support getting it passed by council.
- Dawn Taft clarified that the ordinance is currently in legal review. Emily offered to help push it through legal review.
- Dawn Taft to send the complete updated draft to Emily & Greg
- Zach clarified that once the ordinance passes, the tree board will push out communications about the updates and new items in it.

Deb Taylor left the meeting at 8:10 PM

New Business

- **Green Summit already coming up again**

- Taking place on October 11, 2025. Rebranded as the Green Festival. Will be held at Driskell Park again this year.
- There was general consensus that the board should participate again in 2025.
- Dawn Taft suggested bringing more saplings to give away
- John kept his rain gauge and suggests that we give those away again this year.

- **CCAN grant:**

- Previously Saved 800 of 4,000 trees that had vines that needed to be saved
- Chesapeake climate action network has teamed up with Casey Tree to extend the work. This grant covers multiple municipalities.
- There is another meeting from 5pm - 6pm on August 7 to talk to tree stewards to discuss how to approach this in the fall. This will be to discuss plans through 2026.
- Without CCAN we can't work on public property. With them, we can work on private property under their insurance. Will be able to address a good portion of the private property trees that have been already identified.
- Casey Tree has taken the City's data and is fine tuning it for the private property trees that need help.
- Dawn Taft is looking into yard signs with something like "I had help removing invasive vines from my trees and you can too" with a QR code so that people can find out more.
- Thinking about doing these removals on the same day as the current invasive removals, but this may take away from invasive removals in the public parks.

- **Green Festival Planning/Ideas:**

- The application for the Green Festival is due after our September meeting. The festival itself is after our October meeting
- Would like to have stickers and other activities we had last year.
- Possibly a contest for guessing the size of tree that requires a permit, or other questions about the ordinance.

- **Public Comment**

None.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Next meeting will be September 3, 2025. Gloria will not be in attendance.