
CITY OF HYATTSVILLE SHADE TREE BOARD

MINUTES | FEBRUARY 4, 2026

Present: Kathryn Kutzner, Randy Fletcher, John Healy, Dawn Bohls, Deb Taylor, Taylor Johnson, Gloria Felix-Thompson, Kyla Gallagher

Absent: Zachary Dorner

Staff: Dawn Taft

Visitor(s): Council Member Barnes, Mike Bonds

Meeting called to order at 7:32 pm

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

Outstanding

- TP26-001

January appeal of tree permit due to solar panels

- Decision pending
- Council Member Barnes – suggested that the Tree Board should educate City staff on the benefits and importance of trees.
- Will likely get more permit requests to remove trees due to solar panels.
- Taylor proposes a discussion on educating City Council and residents on the value of keeping trees vs solar panels.

White oak trees

- Dawn Taft has been tracking removal permits based on tree types, including white oaks.
- Environmental stress seems to be causing issues with white oaks.
- White oaks are dying at a quicker pace than other oak trees.

Tree planting initiative with ARPA funds

- 1,142 trees have been planted between 2023 and 2025.
 - Trees planted are split between private properties and right of ways.

2) Old Business

- a. Shade Tree Board Leadership Transition

Katy Kutzner – Secretary

Zak Dorner – Vice Chair

John Healy – Chair

b. Heritage Tree Plaques

Discussion to reinvigorate the heritage tree program, which most recently was held in 2021 to celebrate the City's 135th anniversary.

Council Member Barnes updated the budget request and discussed with Council Members. Moving forward, Council Members will discuss the budget and approve it in the spring, and Council Members Barnes and Strab will request funds for this program.

The program for 2026 will celebrate the City's 140th anniversary. Winners will receive a metal plaque.

c. Tree Report Card Checklist

Dawn Taft – received approval for the Tree Board to do the checklist/report card. Randy has drafted the card and shared with the Committee. Will recirculate this card to the group and will continue discussion during next month's meeting.

d. PG County Real Estate Documents

No update from Taylor.

e. Update on DPW/Contractor's rationale for tree pruning/removals

Will be discussed at next month's meeting.

3) New Business

a. Social media

- i. Winter weather tips to protect trees and Casey Trees
John will connect with Katy on this.

4) Approval of the previous January 2026 minutes

January 2026 minutes approved.

5) Public Comment

None.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Next meeting will be March 4, 2026.