
CITY OF HYATTSVILLE SHADE TREE BOARD

MINUTES | APRIL 1, 2026

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

Absent: Taylor Johnson

Staff: Dawn Taft

Visitor(s): Council Member Barnes, Council Member Strab

Meeting called to order at 7:33 pm

1) Approval of the previous March 2026 minutes

March 2026 minutes approved.

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

Approved

- TP 26-004 and 005

Denied

- TP 26-002 denied from last month's outstanding
- TP 26-003

Outstanding

- TP 26-006 – 010

To discuss for next month (add to agenda items for next week)

- People want to take down mulberries, walnut, and sweet gum because they are "messy"
- Understory vs canopy trees – types of trees being replaced by trees being taken down
- Having Dawn doing a presentation on our canopy coverage based on the City's database. Report on 750-800 trees recently planted.
- Pepco reburying lines (from Council Members Barnes and Strab)

3) Old Business

- a. Heritage Tree Plaques

Council Member Barnes: Still ongoing, will be included in budget. Final approval two months away, with expected disbursement in late June/July.

Plans can be made now on how the funds will be spent. Per Dawn Taft, a fall event would be recommended.

b. Tree Report Card Update

Dawn Taft proposed suggestions to the draft tree report card, per the City's communications team:

- Code compliance issue vs recommendation of suggested issue of the tree's health. Suggested language: "Our volunteers have noticed an issue that may be affecting the health of one or more trees on your property. This flyer is meant to raise awareness of how you can address these concerns before they become a danger. You are not required to take action, but we recommend reviewing the links below for free information and resources. For further information or specific questions, email treeboard2020@hyattsville.org."
- Include some space to identify which trees are concerning.
- Lack of direct advice on the City's website for dealing with all tree issues, and including a companion FAQ on card.

Shade Tree Board's suggestions:

- Keeping the language and bullet points as simple as possible, wording at a minimum.
- Importance of contact information for people to follow up with request for more information.
- Randy will take these suggestions and update the report card, and will discuss at the next month's meeting.

c. Tree Ordinance Update

Still forthcoming.

4) New Business

- a) Shade Tree Board's proposed ordinance to combine this group with other groups (per Councilmember Straub's comments at end of last month's meeting).
- Council Member Straub: Council recently created two other committees within the last one. Overall strategy to consolidate committees due to capacity and constraints. The idea is not to dissolve the Shade Tree Board but make it part of the Environmental Committee as part of the overlapping interests.
 - Goal is not to stop doing the Shade Tree's work but streamline it into part of the overall Environment Committee's purview.
 - Member feedback:
 - Our time is fully committed to tree issues, and how would that relate to the priorities of the Environment Committee?
 - How will this impact the proposed tree ordinance?
 - Understanding the differences between us being a board vs committee.
 - Previous purview was just to deny/approve tree permits, and the overall scope of this group has expanded recently.

- These are all proposed changes, with no decision being reached yet. Encourage public comment, whether as a group or as individuals.
- Budget meeting will be April 18th.
- This will be added to old business for next month.

5) Public Comment

None.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Next meeting will be May 6, 2026.