

City of Hyattsville Tree Board Meeting Minutes

Friday 7 July 2020

Via Zoom
APPROVED 8/7/2020

Present: Immordino, Johnson , Smith, Felix-Thompson, Fletcher, Luebke joined later

Absent: Keondra Freemyn

Staff: Taft, Riddle

Visitor: Jim Groves

The meeting was called to order at 1:27 pm.

Welcome to new member Keondra Freemyn

The minutes from March 2020 meeting were approved

The following outstanding permits were discussed: April to July 1 38 permits approved, 3 not-applicable, 1 denied, 2 outstanding

Grant awards and progress: **THE CITY OF HYTTSVILLE** ~~We~~ received a grant that will be used to plant 75 street trees this year and next year, another 43 trees on private property. It will also fund 5 Storm Water education workshops in English and Spanish. The first workshop is currently scheduled for November. If it falls through because of COVID, it will be moved to spring. Anacostia Watershed Society will do a workshop on animals of the Anacostia and how storm water run-off affects them, another on managing our land without chemicals. There will also be a workshop on how to properly care for our trees in conjunction with Dept. of Natural Resources and Dept of Environment. Looking for citizen help on a phenology study of when trees leaf out, when the bloom, etc so the data can be used by climate change scientists to better understand affect on different species.

Suggestions for possible changes to Shade Tree Ordinance:

Immordino suggested that the size for protection of trees is too large. We are still losing significant amount of canopy. We are also losing so many large trees to disease and death. If people are cutting smaller un-protected trees, there is nothing to grow up to become a large tree. Recommend a revision of the size policy in coordination with our surrounding communities and the upcoming tree canopy study.

We suggest that all fines for tree permit infractions should be applied to a city fund specifically for replacement of trees.

Luebke suggested that we adopt a policy that allows a person whose permit was denied to pay a fee based on DBH to plant trees on public land instead. DC had such a policy once and no longer does. We want to check into why.

Johnson suggested some kind of heritage tree plan to celebrate the Hyattsville anniversary and folks could then receive a plaque or some such recognition for their tree that was around when the city of Hyattsville was founded. Would need to create some guidelines that are easy for citizens to determine and perhaps somewhat loose, so citizens are proud of having a heritage tree. Hyattsville had a Champion tree contest, we should talk with city foresters for guidelines. City would likely support this idea with funding for the plaques.

Johnson motioned creation of a heritage tree program in conjunction with the Hyattsville 135th anniversary, Fletcher seconded, unanimous approval.

Ms. Riddle pointed out that we have had a significant loss of tree canopy over the years, some due to climate change and issues beyond our control. What this means is native trees may not do well in the climate change. The phenology study will help us to develop lists of trees that will do well in current climate conditions.

Ms. Taft suggested citizens have the ability to pay money to the city to replace a tree that they do not want to plant on their own property. They can only do this with permission of the Tree Board.

New Business: before our next meeting, committee members are encouraged to draft formal language for their proposals above so we can vote on whether or not to send them to City Council for adoption.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30

Next meeting 7 August at 1 pm