

## City of Hyattsville Tree Board Meeting Minutes

Friday 7 May 2021 APPROVED

### Zoom Meeting

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

Absent: none

Staff: Dawn Taft

Visitor: none

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm.

The minutes from April meeting were amended to clarify the number of permits not yet considered. Also a clarification of the intention of the Heritage Tree Program. Approved as amended.

The following outstanding permits were discussed: 6 approved and one new one not assessed yet. In regard to the sweetgum from previous meeting, it was assessed by third party who determined that even after pruning, there would still be a moderate risk of damage or injury, so the resident was allowed to remove the tree.

If we notice an illegal removal of a tree, here is the proper procedure. Call Dawn or Gloria to see if there is a permit. If not call the non-emergency police number (301-985-5060) to say we suspect there is an illegal removal of tree in process. The police are supposed to get a copy of each permit to know if the removal is legal or not. The ordinance says Tree Board members can stop the removal, but we do not follow that. So we want to work on changing that as we revise our ordinance.

Heritage Tree essay and artwork submissions – there have been two art entries, no essays. Because art works are very good, we discussed awarding a prize to both, perhaps a full award to one and a partial to the second and return the remaining funds towards the plaques. Randy offered to make a certificate for the winners. \$150 prize as already stipulated to the winner, \$100 to the honorable mention. Approved unanimously. Award ceremony could be near the large tree in Driscoll Park.

To verify the trees, Randy and Gloria will look at half, Taylor and Smitty will look at half. We can hand out the plaque at the time of inspection if the tree qualifies. We have a deadline of the

26<sup>th</sup>, so both aspects wrap up at the same time. There was discussion of whether or not to include a letter congratulating folks on the heritage tree – we like the idea. We can also announce tree winners at the art award ceremony. We will want to make sure we have local media there as well.

New Business: Dawn reported the planting of 42 trees at 38<sup>th</sup> Ave Park some of which line the path in partnership with the Beautification Committee and Parks and Planning.

Dawn also reported we got the Pepco grant for 40 trees thanks to Casey Trees sharing the grant with us. Pepco will be reaching out to residents for free tree planting on private property. We are also applying for a grant from the National Arbor Foundation and partnering with Casey Trees to plant 155 trees on public and private land around the city and 30 at University Hills Park where we can ask for volunteers and teach them about planting trees. The city also hopes to plant another 50 trees planted in public rights of way around the city. These will be 2” caliper trees about 5 to 6 feet in height.

There was discussion about preserving trees at the Clay Property whose owners have applied for a variance to clear cut a large portion of the property. There are a large number of specimen trees on the property that are at risk. There are also environmental concerns for long-term health of the eco-system. The Landy development is owned by the same developer who is proposing 150 additional homes on this property. We can propose an statement in opposition to the clear cutting based on environmental and economic values.

Where do we have space to plant? Lots of mature trees are dying on public and private land. Many right of way trees were under power lines. When those trees die, we cannot replace them with shade trees because they are too tall. Also, many older trees were planted over water, sewer, gas lines and when there is an issue, the tree goes. The city is trying not to plant again in those locations.

Tree releaf program is coming in the fall to teach folks what to do with their tree leaves. September a virtual tree care program will teach proper planting, tree care, etc.

October is the tree walk by Joe Luebke. Both the tree care program and the tree walk will be in English and Spanish. November is green house-keeping month with education on storm water, etc. Will also work in connection with Healthy Trees Hyattsville which is promoting tree education.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55

The next meeting will be 4 June at 1:30 July meeting will be 9 July