

**Town of Bel Air Government**  
**MINUTES**  
**TREE COMMITTEE**  
January 13, 2021

The Town of Bel Air Tree Committee meeting took place via the *GoToMeeting* virtual platform on January 13, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Simini, Chair  
Marion McCarron  
Wayne Merkel

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Kevin Bianca, Town Commissioner  
Amy Chmielewski, Mayor  
Rowan Glidden, Senior Planner  
Kevin Small, Director of Planning  
Kathi Santora, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT:** Graham Becker  
Frank Lopez, Vice Chair

Mr. Simini opened the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

**I. Administrative Matters:**

**A. Review of Minutes:**

Mr. Simini asked for a review of the December 9, 2020 minutes.

P.1, last line on page: Mr. Merkel stated that he, not Mr. Lopez, has said that there were Tree City signs at town entrances.

P. 2, Section C., 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph: change Autumn Glory Maples to October Glory Red Maples.

P. 2, Section C., 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph should read: "Mr. Merkel noted that October Glory Red Maple trees were planted in the west side median strip on Rt. 24 N, primarily from Aldi to Best Buy."

Ms. McCarron moved to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Simini seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

**B. Change in Agenda Item**

Mr. Glidden noted that he did not include election of new Tree Committee officers on the

agenda. Officers should be reelected during the first meeting of the calendar year. He asked if the committee wished to delay this until more committee members are present. All members present agreed.

## **II. Old Business**

### **A. Tree City USA 2020 reflective stickers**

Mr. Glidden stated that Mr. Merkel investigated and confirmed that these stickers are for street signs. Mr. Glidden is not aware of any current signs that would accommodate these stickers. He asked if the committee wanted to look into purchasing such signs.

Mr. Merkel stated that the current Tree City USA road sign is 24" X 30" and they would need to be purchased now. They typically stand at town entrances. He has old photo slides that show several past signs, photographed in the 90s.

A sign placed in the location near the Weis current location, for example, would today be hidden by shrubbery.

Mr. Glidden said that if Mr. Merkel wanted to drop off the slide to the Planning Department, he could have it scanned.

Mr. Glidden stated that if budgets allow, perhaps signs could be reinstalled in the future.

Mr. Small noted that the town will eventually look at gateway signage as a part of the Wayfinding Plan. Tree City USA signage might be added. Mr. Glidden thought that these signs cost about \$65.00.

### **B. Street Tree Requests**

Mr. Glidden noted that he forwarded all resident requests, along with a map, to committee members. Before sending to bid, he asked the committee members to review and comment.

The resident's tree species preference at 712 S. Shamrock is still unknown. She asked for a tree that had red leaves all year. The tree will be planted in a 10' wide grass strip. Mr. Glidden asked for suggestions.

Mr. Merkel stated there is not a maple red that fits that description. There is a Crimson King and Royal Red Norway Red Maple variety that maintains a dark, liver color all year. Another tree that is dark all year is a Copper or Purple Beech.

Mr. Simini noted that Norway Maple may not be a good street tree. Mr. Merkel stated

Norway Maples are considered to be invasive.

Mr. Bianca believes that the resident would be open to any recommendation.

Mr. Glidden asked for recommendations. Mr. Merkel said the Japanese Cutleaf is red all year. It is more of a shrub. October Glory Red Maple would best fit her request, he added.

Mr. Merkel referred Mr. Glidden to a Penn State publication of landscape tree fact sheets. There is a new edition available. There is also a publication of compatible tree fact sheets that describes trees thrive well near utilities.

Mr. Merkel stated that two trees on the existing list would be suitable: the Goldspire or Freeman Maple.

Mr. Bianca, who had been texting with the resident regarding her preferences during the meeting, stated that she may prefer the Goldspire Maple.

Mr. Glidden asked for additional comments about the requests. Mr. Simini stated all sugar maples should be away from road to protect from road salt and snow piles.

### **C. Champion Tree Measurements**

Mr. Simini asked for updates. Mr. Merkel stated that he received the updated list from the Forestry Board. There are 30 – 32 probable champion trees in town limits. There was question about a tree at 510 Catherine Street; however, this address is not in town limits. Mr. Merkel stated there is a tree at the Mann House that is not listed. It is a Caucasian Wing Nut. At an attempt to measure several years ago, it was covered with poison ivy.

Mr. Glidden would like to have the Town's Champion Tree booklet updated.

Mr. Merkel said that Forestry Board has tools, but the measuring may need to wait until the pandemic is over.

### **D. 26 N. Hickory Avenue – American Sycamore Tree**

Mr. Glidden is waiting for a letter from the developer's arborist regarding the tree. However, they expect to move ahead with the intended project and with the tree removal. Mr. Glidden would like to take photos of the removal and will advise committee when he has date confirmation.

### **III. New Business**

#### **A. Street Tree selection update**

The list of recommended trees is currently on the Town website. It has not changed in at least 10 years. Mr. Glidden would like the committee to review and make recommendations at the next meeting. He prefers a somewhat limited selection to simplify the process, such as 3 – 4 selections for each area size.

#### **B. Bel Air Downtown Alliance Design Guidelines**

Mr. Glidden stated that this document will be revised in the next year. He sent the committee only the pages that dealt with landscaping and trees. The guidelines will also include container plantings. He asked that the committee review this document and provide recommendations at the next meeting.

### **IV. Other Business**

Mayor Chmielewski sits on the Appearance & Beautification Committee, which had been working on updates to Alice Anne Park prior to the pandemic. They were interested in adding and/or removing trees. The committee will visit the park on April 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. She welcomes tree committee members if they feel comfortable with gathering in a group.

There was poor internet reception during Mayor Chmielewski's portion of the conversation. Mr. Small summarized the issue. The Appearance and Beautification Committee will look at the park from a neighborhood point of view. There is a large growth of bamboo and many trees that may need removal or trimming. Grass in the area is dead.

Mr. Simini then asked about the Farmers Market opening day and whether the Tree Committee will give away seedlings as usual.

Mr. Small stated the market is planning to open on time, with COVID restrictions. They will meet with Master Gardeners soon to see if they plan to be on hand; it tends to be a gathering spot. The Tree Committee should decide if members feel comfortable with being there. Mr. Simini said the tree order has been placed.

Last year, the trees were instead given away at the Scarborough dump. There were long lines.

The Committee agreed with the chair to postpone election of officers until the next meeting, which will take place on February 10, 2021.

Mr. Merkel moved to adjourn. Ms. McCarron seconded the motion. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.