

Town of Bel Air Government
MINUTES
TREE COMMITTEE
March 10, 2021

The Town of Bel Air Tree Committee meeting took place via the *GoToMeeting* virtual platform on March 10, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Simini, Chair
Marion McCarron
Wayne Merkel

IN ATTENDANCE: Kevin Bianca, Town Commissioner
Rowan Glidden, Senior Planner
Kathi Santora, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Graham Becker
Frank Lopez, Vice Chair

Mr. Simini opened the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

I. Administrative Matters

A. Review of Minutes

Mr. Simini asked for review of the February 10, 2021 minutes. There were no corrections.

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

II. Old Business

A. Arbor Day

Mr. Simini had sent an email to Mr. Glidden that described how the tree give-a-way table would be organized at the Farmers Market opening day, taking COVID 19 guidelines into consideration. The opening date is April 10, 2021.

Mr. Simini recommended pre-packaging all trees before the event. These will include wet newspaper and tree ID tags. In the past, the Tree Committee bagged them onsite. However, this can contribute to people gathering and waiting in line to get a tree. Volunteers will place them in separate buckets with labels. A front-facing table will hold cards that describe the tree and its care. Markers will be placed on the ground to show 6 feet distances.

Mr. Simini also recommended limiting selection to 5 – 6 species and a stock of 300 trees. Mr. Merkel noted that it takes four people about 2 – 3 hours to bag. Mr. Simini noted that if someone requests a lot of trees, a special order might be considered since there is likely to be a surplus of trees in the absence of Arbor Day events this year.

Last year, the give-a-way at the landfill caused congestion. Mr. Bianca noted that landfill personnel suggested limiting species or giving away trees at another site, such as the Equestrian Center. He added that advertising for the event could specify that these are seedlings and not big trees.

This year, the Tree Committee can consider selections that include Red Bud, Allegheny Chinkapin, American Plum, Bald Cypress, Black Oak, Hazelnut, Northern Red Oak, Paw Paw, Persimmon, Serviceberry, Southern Red Oak, Virginia Pine and White Oak.

Mr. Merkel and Mr. Bianca volunteered to help bag trees in advance. Mr. Simini is willing to drop them at members' homes. Both volunteered to be at the April 10th give-a-way.

Mr. Glidden has drafted the Arbor Day proclamation for the Board of Town Commissioners.

B. Canopy Analysis

Mr. Glidden located the canopy analysis that was done in 2011. It is assumed that there are no major changes, except that many Ash trees have been removed due to emerald ash borer.

He recommends a current focus on trees other than maples, in order to add variety.

Mr. Merkel noted that there were 1,763 trees in the Town's rights of way. There are about 162 streets in Town. Mr. Glidden noted that some trees have been added/replaced since last count. He expects to do a recount in the future.

C. Major Oak Fertilization

The Major Oak fertilization will take place in late March. It is performed every two years. The contract is with A&A Tree Experts. Rowan will share the date in the event anyone wants to be on hand.

D. Street Tree selection list update

Mr. Glidden previously sent a draft selection list to all committee members. He asked for comments.

Mr. Simini suggested eliminating the maple varieties. Mr. Merkel suggested adding Kousa Dogwood in the 4' – 6' category. He also recommended taking the Alternate Leaved Dogwood out of the 6' – 10' category. He suggested adding Golden Rain Tree in the 6'–10' category.

Mr. Merkel noted that Yoshino cherry trees were planted in the past Bel Air StreetScape project in the median near Macy's. He stated that Yellowwood could be added. They are planted on Bond Street.

Mr. Merkel suggested removing the October Glory maple; Mr. Glidden suggested removing the Ginko.

E. Champion Tree measurement

Mr. Merkel stated that he provided a list of 30 trees located within Town limits. Four have died. These include #1219 (White Ash, 440 Maitland); #1245 (Mockernut Hickory, 507 N. Shamrock); #1205 (Paper Birch, 318 Webster Street); #1243 (Persimmon, 622 Rock Spring Road).

Mr. Merkel expects that plans will be made to measure trees this spring, when weather is warmer. The Forestry Board has the tools and equipment and he will contact them. He will help to measure county trees and then also help to measure those in Town limits.

Two Red Oaks are listed on Rockfield Manor property. He believes one is gone.

Mr. Merkel confirmed that Jim Sherring of the Harford County Forestry Board is aware of trees that no longer exist.

F. Bel Air Downtown Alliance (BADA) Design Guidelines

Mr. Glidden asked for additional comments about the BADA document that was previously distributed to committee members. He noted that they are recommending adding male Ginkos to Main and Bond streets. They also suggest eliminating the White Fringe Trees in the area. There were no other comments.

G. 26 N. Hickory – American Sycamore Tree

The developer still does not have a final contract on the property but has assured the Town that they will remove the tree when they are able. They will advise the Town on timing.

Mr. Merkel stated that he has confirmed with the State of Maryland that Arbor X Tree Service's licensure documents are in order except for their proof of insurance.

III. New Business

Mr. Glidden reiterated that the Town would prepare its Comprehensive Plan update this year. There will be focus groups and he would like a Tree Committee representative to be a part of this. It will involve 1 – 2 meetings.

As per usual, there will be no April Tree committee meeting since the Arbor Day celebration takes place during that month.

Mr. Bianca stated that there will be a meeting at Alice Ann Park on April 12 to get community input about the park's current status and plans for improvements. He suggested that a Tree Committee member be on hand. If this is not convenient, he is willing to meet with someone on the Saturday before (April 10, the same day as the Farmers Market) to review the park's condition and make recommendations about trees.

Mr. Merkel stated that Maryland Arbor Day is the first Wednesday in April, the 7th. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, the 30th.

IV. Adjournment

Mr. Merkel moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. McCarron seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.