

**Leesburg Tree Commission
Minutes**

The Leesburg Tree Commission met on Tuesday, May 18th, at 7:00 pm in the Lower Level Conference Room II at Town Hall and Virtually via WebEx.

Present: Commissioner Earl Hower, Patricia Hatfield, John Groothuis, Philip Marshall, Ron Platt, and Elizabeth Welch.

Electronic Participation: N/A

Absent: Thomas Adams

Council: N/A

Staff: Tyler Wright, Department of Public Works and Capital Projects

Volunteer: Chris Spigt

Public: Jennifer Chu, Environmental Advisory Commission Chair, Beth Flores-Sastre, Virginia Cooperative Extension.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hower at 7:05 pm.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chairman Hower read aloud the statement put forth by the Leesburg Town Attorney to allow for all virtual participation.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion to approve the amended agenda was asked for by Chair Hower.

Motion to approve agenda:	Marshall
Second:	Welch
Carried:	6 – 0 – 1 (Adams)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Marshall to approve minutes from the April, 2021 meeting with the correction of the date to read April 13th and not March 16th.

Motion to approve:	Marshall
Second:	Groothuis
Carried:	5 – 0 – 1 (Adams) – 1 (Platt)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Beth Flores-Sastre from Virginia Cooperative Extension Service provided a 45 minute presentation about the Spotted Lanternfly to the group.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Outreach

Town staff has been approved to coordinate a Virtual Tree Walk with the Public Information Officer and Homeowner's Associations within corporate limits.

Updates:

Commissioner Hatfield expressed concerns over meeting with HOA's during the current COVID-19 pandemic. She has been asked by the Greenway Farm HOA to discuss this further into the spring and summer, depending on vaccine availability.

Other commissioners have not been able to reach the HOA or have been finding it difficult to move through them.

Update 16 Mar 21:

There is still some pushback from HOA's to wait until spring/summer to meet due to the ongoing pandemic. The item was tabled until after the Flower and Garden Festival.

Chairman Hower would like to see some private trees be added to the lists and have the impetus for wanting to perform these tree walks are to educate the general public on why trees are necessary and the ecosystem service benefits which they provide to humans and wildlife alike.

Update 18 May:

Commissioner Hatfield and Hower have been contacted and walked their respective HOA's and are moving this item forward. They are hoping that a summer meeting will be possible.

Adopt A Spot

The lock has seized and is no longer working. Staff Member Wright will use bolt cutters to remove the lock and Chair Hower will replace the lock.

Commissioners Welch and Groothuis will maintain the area for the rest of May and Hatfield and Marshall will take over in June.

OLD BUSINESS

Flower and Garden Festival 2021 – After Action Report

Commissioner Marshall said he really enjoyed the festival and interacting with the residents. Commissioner Hatfield said she preferred to have the festival at Ida Lee than in the Historic District. Hatfield also had some questions pertaining to the Booth Fee and Staff Member Wright will assist her in obtaining those answers. Wright will also see if he can find out what trees may be available from VDOF for next year.

Annual Report to Town Council

Chairman Hower presented his first draft of the Tree Commission Annual Report to Town Council. He highlighted many areas of what was accomplished from late 2019 to early 2021. The Tree Commission did not present an Annual Report in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He asked all commissioners to send photos and any other news or information that would be relevant to the mission of the commission.

Update 13 Apr 21:

Chairman Hower will have final draft ready by the next meeting. He would like to present it to the Council in May.

Update 18 May:

Chair Hower will present the Annual Report to Town Council on 8 June 2021.

Spotted Lanternfly

Commissioner Welch shared her first iteration of her PowerPoint presentation to the commission. All commissioners were asked to review the information and give ideas and examples. Chairman Hower shared with the group how the emerald ash borer presentation to Town Council was short and provided a brief overview of the insect and what it could do to tree canopy in town. Hower asked Welch to shorten the presentation a few slides and put in more action verbs to determine how we can better address SLF in the town.

Update 13 April 21:

Mrs. Beth Flore-Sastra from Virginia Cooperative Extension will be making a presentation to the group in May about the SLF. Commissioner Hatfield gave out more information to the group on the insect and let everyone know that the insect has been confirmed in Prince William county.

Update 18 May:

Beth Flores-Sastre with Virginia Cooperative Extension gave a 45 minute presentation at this meeting. It was in-depth about the life cycle of the species as well as the potential economic fall out that insect could deliver to the county.

Ten Year Tree Canopy Health Report to Town Council

Spearheaded by Chairman Hower, the commission is going to write a report detailing the loss of tree canopy in TOL and present it to Town Council during a work session. The Tree Commission met on 10 October 2020 from 2-4 pm to discuss this work. The report will show where tree loss has occurred inside the corporate limits and what this loss means to the residents of the town. It will also address reforestation and how to potentially fund new planting efforts within the town.

Commissioners urged the report to have more action verbs and very strong and attainable goals. If possible, create an overlay layer in ArcMap to share where tree canopy has been lost and where tree canopy has spread. The Planning Commission and Environmental Advisory Commission has expressed interest in being presented the findings of this report after Town Council has been briefed.

Update:

Chairman Hower has not been able to make the new edits to the document. The new commissioners were briefed on this Report and gave remarks on their vision of how it should look and feel. More discussion to be had at the next meeting.

Update 16 Mar 21:

No new edits have been made. Chairman Hower has asked all commissioners to send tree loss/gain photos to Staff Member Wright.

Update 13 April 21:

Staff Member Wright will email LCPS to see where tree canopy study stands and will also work with Commissioner Marshall for iTree Eco Project. No new edits have been made.

Update 18 May:

Staff Member Wright will contact LCPS and see if the Tree Canopy Analysis has been completed. LCPS has been working on it but have had some major hindrances from the GIS contractor and returning to a hybrid teaching schedule.

NEW BUSINESS

Legacy Leesburg Town Plan

Staff Member Wright shared with the Commission the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan draft website. He instructed them to all go online and look at the draft language and provide feedback to him by the end of April.

Update 18 May:

Jennifer Chu from the EAC provided the two recommendations from the EAC. Town Character – Chu stated that since Leesburg is a Tree City USA it shows how much the residents care for the trees and should be included in keeping with the Towns Character.

All Things Green – EAC is recommending installing a new Community Orchard similar in fashion to the shared gardens at Ida Lee.

Liberty Street Storage Renovations

Chair Hower provided a detail list of items to purchase to renovate the existing storage capacity at the Liberty Street location. The final estimate came to ~\$200.

Hower asked for a motion to appropriate these funds in the budget to be used for this renovation. Vice Chair Hatfield made the motion.

Motion to approve funds:	Hatfield
Second:	Marshall
Carried:	6 – 0 – 1 (Adams)

Cooperative Project

Chairman Hower and Chu (EAC) presented to the group the Chesapeake Bay initiative to plant 600,000 trees over the next five years. Hower and Chu want to find areas in town to plant trees and lots of them. They want to specifically work on riparian areas and street trees. Tree Banks could be used for this project. Commissioner Marshall will put together a proposal to hold a tree planting event in town.

Update 18 May:

Hower and Marshall have been trying to join these meetings but having difficulty as it s during normal business hours and has conflicted with their private work schedule.

As it was 9PM, Staff Member Wright alerted that according to the By-Laws, if any other New Business were to be held, then a vote would need to brought before the commission to extend the meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Groothuis to table New Business item 8D until the next meeting.

Motion to table item: Groothuis
Second: Hower
Carried: 6 – 0 – 1 (Adams)

Staff Comments

Liaison Wright thanked the Tree Commissioners for their continued mission and meeting this evening. He asked that all commissioners to watch for Spotted Lanternfly signs or any other pest or safety issue on Town owned trees and alert staff.

Commission Comments

Chairman Hower thanked the other commissioners for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Hatfield raised a question to see if town funds could be allocated for purchasing and installing trees on private property. Staff Member Wright told her of the Tree Bank Funds and how homeowners can request this money through a new program which will be brought up in the fall.

Council Comments

N/A

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hower asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 PM.

Motion to approve adjournment: Groothuis
Second: Platt
Carried: 6 – 0 – 1 (Adams)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.