

## **Leesburg Tree Commission Minutes**

The Leesburg Tree Commission met on Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 7:13 pm in the Lower Level Conference Room II at Town Hall.

**Present:** Commissioner Earl Hower, John Groothuis, Philip Marshall, and Elizabeth Welch.

**Electronic Participation:** N/A

**Absent:** Patricia Hatfield and Ron Platt

**Council:** N/A

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

**Volunteer:** Jennifer Chu

**Public:** Sabina Puppo

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hower at 7:13 pm.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

A motion to amend the agenda to add a 7E – Riparian/Buffer Area Tree Planting Projects and strike 5A and move 5B to 5A. He then asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda was asked for by Chairman Hower.

Motion to approve agenda:	Marshall
Second:	Groothuis
Carried:	4 – 0 – 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chair Hower asked for a motion to amend the October, 2021 minutes to strike where it assigns the Minutes as being from the September, 2021 meeting (a clerical error with copying and pasting). Chairman Hower then asked for a motion to approve the amended October, 2021 minutes.

Motion to approve:	Marshall
Second:	Groothuis
Carried:	4 – 0 – 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sabina Puppo is new resident of the Town of Leesburg and has expressed interest in volunteering for the Tree Commission. She says that the Town is beautiful and she loves trees. She has planted over 3,000 trees in her life.

Jennifer Chu has resigned from the Environmental Advisory Commission but will continue to attend and volunteer her time with the Tree Commission.

### **SUBCOMMITTEES**

#### **Adopt A Spot**

The Adopt A Spot has had and will continue to have holiday decorations. Staff Member Wright will communicate to the Chairman when the holiday decorations will be removed by the Town and Chairman Hower will remove the decorations as well. Chairman Hower and Commissioner Marshall will work after the new year to maintain the spot through the winter.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Town Email Usage and Awareness Training**

Staff Member Wright reminded all commissioners to use Town of Leesburg email when conducting business and to ensure that their Awareness Training will be renewed soon. Wright explained the importance of these items to the commission.

#### **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.

#### **Update 16 June:**

LCPS has still not submitted land classification study. Staff Member Wright will reach out to the program. Photos of tree loss, tree plantings, and insect/frost damage are needed for the report. Please send to Chairman Hower or Staff Member Wright as soon as possible. A Work Session may be in order this summer to finalize the details.

Update 21 July: Tree Commissioners and Staff will meet for a Work Session to go over the outline and begin writing the document. LCPS has still not sent the Land Classification Study to Staff.

Update 21 Sept: LCPS has still not given data and report to staff. Staff Member Wright is still working to obtain data and move this forward. Chairman Hower gave all commissioners a Draft Copy of the document. The Commission may make the October meeting as a work session.

Update 19 Oct: LCPS still has yet to send over data. Wright will reach out again. Chairman Hower has a more polished draft and will send to the commission. Wright asked for a new Work Session in February, 2022 if possible.

Update 21 Dec 2021 – N/A

## **New Business**

### **Flower and Garden Festival**

The Tree Commissioners determined that having a booth at the Flower and Garden Festival was needed. A motion to approve the filling out of the application and paying the booth fee was made by Commissioner Marshall.

Motion to approve Tree Commission booth at Flower and Garden Festival:

Motion: Marshall  
Second: Welch  
Carried: 4 – 0 – 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

Staff Member Wright asked the Tree Commission to discuss which trees were to be given away at the booth for 2022. Wright brought up the website where seedlings are purchased, and discussion began. Wright asked the Tree Commission to approve at least three (3) species seedlings to purchase, with the goal of only one species to be bought (in case of inventory supply issues).

Commissioner Marshall discussed having two species and a consensus was agreed upon to have two species of trees. One tree species is to be a large mature shade tree. The other is an ornamental tree. This has never been done before and it was agreed upon that this would not alienate or impoverish some residents and festival goers if they did have enough space for a large mature shade tree.

A motion was made by Commissioner Marshall to purchase both one large shade tree species and one ornamental tree species for the Festival and that later quantities would be voted on. Large Mature Species: Sweetgum, Yellow Poplar, Bald Cypress. Ornamental Species: Chickasaw Plum, American Plum, Redbud.

Motion: Marshall  
Second: Welch  
Carried: 4 – 0 – 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

### **Tree City USA Endorsement**

Staff Member Wright explained what Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation was and how Leesburg has been an awarded member for 31 years. Wright asked for a motion from the Tree Commission to endorse the Town to apply for the Tree City USA Award by the Arbor Day Foundation for Calendar Year 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Marshall to endorse the application and apply for the status.

Motion: Marshall  
Second: Groothuis  
Carried: 4 – 0 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

### Liberty Street Storage

Chairman Hower asked for another commissioner to assist with creating swinging doors and wrapping the storage area, located on Liberty Street, for securing items and general cleanliness. Commissioner Marshall said he would assist.

### Tree City USA Photo

Staff Member Wright asked if any Tree Commissioner would like to take a photo next to the Arbor Day Tree. Commissioner Welch and Marshall said they would take a photo in front of the tree. They will meet between Christmas and New Year to take the photo.

### Riparian/Buffer Area Tree Planting Projects

Chairman Hower brought up the idea again about where the Tree Commission and Environmental Advisory Commission can install trees in riparian buffer areas or floodplains in the Town. Commissioners and Staff explained the Tuscarora Creek Mitigation Project to the Public Participants. Staff then explained the Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant program through Virginia Department of Forestry and how both commissions could apply for the grant and use Tree Bank Mitigation Funds as well. The Town has received three VTCW VDOF grants in the past two years.

Staff Member Wright recommended the commissions start on a small project first and to contact the Floodplain Coordinator, Bill Ackman, first to start the ball rolling. There was debate about the ownership of the Old Westpark Golf Course and if a project could happen within those boundaries.

The discussion produced two questions:

What are the criteria for projects (what is a small or large project)?  
Where or What needs improving with the Town or private property?

More information should be gathered before more discussion on this topic.

### **Staff Comments**

Liaison Wright thanked the Tree Commissioners for their continued mission and meeting this evening. He also reminded commissioners that voting for a new Chair and Vice Chair should happen in the first quarter of 2022.

### **Commission Comments**

Chairman Hower explained why Thomas Adams was removed from the Tree Commission and that Ron Platt will be discussed at the next Town Council meeting to be removed for attendance issues.

Commissioner Welch apologized for forgetting the Spotted Lanternfly Proclamation but will bring it at the next meeting to read to the public and commissioners present.

### **Council Comments**

N/A

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Hower asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Motion to approve adjournment: Marshall  
Second: Groothuis  
Carried: 4 – 0 – 2 (Hatfield, Platt)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 PM.