

Tree Commission Monthly Meeting Packet

March 15, 2022, Meeting

**The Town of Leesburg
Leesburg Tree Commission**

AGENDA

Tuesday, March 15th, 2022 7:00PM

Town Hall, Lower-Level Conference Room 2

Chairperson: Earl Hower (24)

Vice Chair: John Groothuis (22)

Commission: Members: Joe Garnreiter (24)

Patricia Hatfield (22)

Phil Marshall (24)

Tom Stokes (22)

Elizabeth Welch (24)

Council Liaison: Council Member Kari Nancy

Leesburg Staff Representative/Liaison: G. Tyler Wright (DPW&CP)

Vision Statement:

To provide leadership to enhance, expand, and preserve the tree canopy for the benefit of the community.

- | | Time: _____ pm |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1) CALL TO ORDER | |
| 2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA | (5 min.) |
| 3) APPROVAL OF THE February, 2022 MINUTES | (5 min.) |
| 4) PUBLIC COMMENTS | (10 min.) |
| 5) SUBCOMMITTEES | (10 min.) |
| a) Adopt A Spot | |
| 6) OLD BUSINESS | (40 min.) |
| a) Town Email Usage and Awareness Training | |
| b) Work Session – Ten Year Tree Canopy Report to Town Council | |
| c) Flower and Garden Festival | |
| d) Arbor Day 2022 | |
| e) Annual Memo to Town Council | |
| f) Riparian Buffer Plantings | |
| 7) NEW BUSINESS | (20 min.) |
| a) Directory Updates | |
| 8) COUNCIL COMMENTS | (5 min) |
| 9) STAFF COMMENTS | (5 min) |
| 10) COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS | (10 min.) |

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11) ADJOURNMENT
pm

Time:

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Tree Commission Meeting Attendance
15 March 2022

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Hower

Commissioner Groothuis

Commissioner Marshall

Commissioner Hatfield

Commissioner Garnreiter

Commissioner Stokes

Commissioner Welch

Electronic Participation:

N/A

Commissioners Not Present:

Public Present: Jennifer Chu, Chris Spigt, Sabina Puppo

Council Liaison Present: N/A

Staff Present:

Staff Member Wright (Public Works & Capital Projects)

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Tree Commission Meeting Synopsis

Points of Interest

15 March 2022

- Tree Commission will continue to educate the Home Owner's Association with Town of Leesburg on the importance of tree planting and tree care. Also, there will be an emphasis on invasive species which could harm trees and the canopy in the Town and installing the Right Tree in the Right Place.
- Tree Commission has a schedule for maintenance at the Adopt a Spot and will add some items for the spring season and ensure it is tip top for the Flower and Garden Festival.
- Tree Commission will reach out to HOA's in town to see if a virtual tree walk can be made to educate residents about the trees in their neighborhood.
- Tree Commission will reach out to the Floodplain Manager for the Town to determine areas inside the corporate limits where trees can be planted to improve riparian buffer areas. Tree Commission and Environmental Advisory Commission will partner together to find areas within the corporate limits to plant trees. Guidance from Plan Review staff is that each individual area will need to be addressed per project.
- Tree Commission will be working to get a schedule together for the Flower and Garden Festival.
- Tree Commission has been notified of LCPS GIS Program is operational again and will work with Town staff for the land classification study.
- Tree Commissioner Marshall will ask Leesburg Elementary School to hold the Arbor Day event at their property this calendar year.

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**Leesburg Tree Commission
Minutes**

The Leesburg Tree Commission met on Tuesday, March 15th, at 7:02 pm in the Lower Level Conference Room II at Town Hall.

Present: Commissioner Earl Hower, Patricia Hatfield, Philip Marshall, Joe Garnreiter, John Groothuis, Elizabeth Welch and Tom Stokes (late).

Electronic Participation: N/A

Absent: N/A

Council: N/A

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

Public: Jennifer Chu, Chris Spigt, Sabina Puppo

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hower at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Hower then asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion to approve agenda: Marshall
Second: Hatfield
Carried: 6 – 0 – 1 (Stokes)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Hower asked for a motion to approve the February 2022 minutes.

Motion to approve: Marshall
Second: Groothuis
Carried: 3 – 0 – 0 – 1 (Welch)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Spigt has stated that his company will donate four (4) sweetgum trees in the one inch caliper range to the Tree Commission for the booth at Flower and Garden Festival.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Adopt A Spot

Staff Member Wright asked the Tree Commissioners to continue to keep the area clean and tidy through the winter. Chairman Hower and Commissioner Hatfield will plant new spring flowers soon and April will be done by committee for the Flower and Garden Festival.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Email Usage and Awareness Training

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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. Commissioner Hatfield stated that she is having issues logging into the system. Wright advised her to call IT to help resolve the issue.

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

Update 25 Jan 2022 – LCPS has been in contact with Staff Wright and is continuing to work with the group to get the Land Classification Study.

Update 15 Feb – Staff Member Wright is to meet with new GIS teacher at LCPS to discuss project and will inform the commission in March of the progress and timeline. He also updated new commissioners of what the Tree Bank is and how funds are introduced and removed.

Update 15 Mar – It was decided to table this item until June, 2022.

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.

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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)

Update 25 Jan 2022:

Tree Commissioners will need to find a cold storage unit for the 2,000 trees that will need to be ordered. Loudoun Now is going to continue its tradition of giving a BOGO discount for the Tree Commission advertisement. It will also be held downtown.

The Tree Commission will vote at the February meeting on what material will be handed out as flyers or PSA. Some ideas are for the new riparian buffer plantings with the EAC, spotted lanternfly, a general urban forestry update, or why trees are beneficial. Also, Northern Virginia Tree Service may be able to donate two trees (15-30 gallon) as raffle items for the Flower and Garden Festival.

Update 15 Feb – Chair Hower informed the group that Loudoun Now is willing to donate one page to the Tree Commission in its Flower and Garden Festival insert. Chickasaw plum and sweetgum are available from VDOF and will be ordered by Wright ASAP. Northern Virginia Tree Service is willing to donate at least two, maybe four, 15 gallon trees to the booth as a raffle item. Discussion ensued as to what the PSA or theme would be for this year. Generally, it was agreed upon to have the theme be general tree facts and knowledge. Discussion into how to give trees away was also had (as there is no budget for bags). Staff Member Wright asked commissioners to get handouts and printable items ready ASAP.

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****Trees have been ordered****

Update 15 Mar – Staff Member Wright informed the group that seedlings have been ordered. A matrix was created as to when Tree Commissioners will be present on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to hand out seedlings and educate members of the public about the Tree Commission and field questions about tree issues. Staff Member Wright will make copies of a handout from Commissioner Hatfield and also create the handouts for the tree species and how to plant and care for trees properly. Sabina Puppo asked for some QR codes to be created to save on paper. Staff Member Wright encouraged the use of the #Treesburg for social media posts. Loudoun Now PSA will cover the benefits of trees to wildlife and humans. A vote will need to take place before 14 April for the approval of the PSA and the funding.

Arbor Day 2022

Staff Wright asked the Tree Commission to decide on whether they would like to hold an Arbor Day celebration at an elementary school this year. Wright informed the group that he anticipates the Arbor Day Foundation will require some type of celebration or event around a tree being planted for the Tree City USA requirement (which the Town has held since 1989). Commissioner Marshall said he would reach out to Leesburg Elementary School near his home to see if they are interested in the Fourth Grade Foresters program and have a tree planted on their campus.

No updates.

Update 15 Mar – Commissioner Marshall informed the group that Arbor Day Celebration will be held on 29 April 2022 at 1PM at Leesburg Elementary School. A black gum will be installed by select students and each student will receive a free tree seedling (Chickasaw plum). Sabina Puppo volunteered to translate the handout into Spanish.

Annual Memo or Presentation to Town Council

Staff Wright asked for the Chairman or a Tree Commissioner to present or create a memo to be presented to Town Council. This is a requirement for each commission and the Chair is usually the driving force behind this program. Chairman Hower said that a memo might be the best form this year since the Commission presented in annual report in June, 2021.

Update 15 Feb – A Memo will be sent to Town Council.

Update 15 Mar – The group decided to table this item until after Flower and Garden Festival. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to table the item until the May, 2022 meeting.

Motion: Marshall
Second: Welch
Carried: 7 – 0 – 0

Riparian/Buffer Area Tree Planting Projects

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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.

A Special Insertion was added to the agenda for the Environmental Advisory Commission to discuss the riparian buffer plantings in Town. The original 21 Jan 2022 meeting was supposed to take place where staff from Plan Review were to discuss how floodplains, FEMA, and issues with planting trees in a stream or riparian buffer area. Town staff gave guidance to both commissions that each riparian buffer will need to be individually addressed and assessed by Town staff as major and minor floodplains are different through the Town.

Commissioner Bill Replogle with the EAC and public representative Jennifer Chu gave a synopsis of what the program/projects could look like and how the EAC could help. Commissioner Replogle asked that the bulk of the planning be at the onus of the Tree Commission and the EAC would help promote the event and engage volunteers.

Chairman Hower produced a list of riparian areas in Town that he would like to see trees planted to help with soil erosion. Discussion occurred about these areas and how this could be funded. Staff Member Wright described the Tree Bank Program as a viable option for funding or going directly to Town Council and asking for an appropriation from the General Fund. Tree species to be planted were also discussed.

Commissioner Replogle has purchased the rights and trademark for the slogan 'Treesburg' acting on Leesburg. He would like to use the site to promote these types of projects as well general benefits of trees. Staff Wright shared his knowledge of a tree plotting on-line site where individuals can virtually plant a tree on a map and it will calculate the benefits of that tree (over years as well). The EAC will meet in February and discuss items that were discussed at this meeting and will provide feedback at the next Tree Commission meeting.

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Tuscarora Creek from Raflo Park past the new bowling alley and Catoctin Creek from Dry Mill to King Street where the two areas that would be the most impactful in terms of the general public's awareness of the program.

Update 15 Feb – The Commission updated new commissioners on the project. A process was established for the project.

1. Discuss where new trees can be planted near a riparian buffer area
2. Determine suitability for the project
3. If suitable, provide a landscape design with species and specifics to Town
4. Town staff will ask Floodplain Manager and Urban Forester to review and determine if the project is sustainable and legal
5. Once feasible, Tree Commission will find property owner and obtain permission to install new trees on the property
6. EAC will find volunteers and assist in finding funding for the project
7. EAC and TC will order materials and install trees with the help of volunteers

Update 15 Mar – Jennifer Chu walked the site and sent photos to the Tree Commission to look at the area mentioned above (off Harrison Street). Discussion ensued as to the who is the property owner, what trees are currently at this location and what could be planted. Jennifer Chu and Commissioner Marshall will walk the site this spring and make some recommendations.

New Business

Directory Update

Staff Member Wright passed around a piece of paper and asked for all commissioners to fill in their personal information to update the directory as tasked by Clerk of Council Eileen Boeing at the Quarterly Liaison Meeting. Wright will check the information and provide any updates to the Clerk.

Council Comments

N/A

Staff Comments

Liaison Wright thanked the Tree Commissioners for their continued mission and meeting this evening. He reminded the commission that each commissioner is allowed to attend remotely via phone call twice in one calendar year. He also informed them of the change to the attendance policy and that he will be in attendance at the April 25, 2022 Town Council Work Session if a Tree Commissioner would like to be present (not required). Wright also informed the group of the changes to the Commissioner Networking event for 2022.

Commission Comments

Chairman Hower reiterated the Town Council Work Session on 25 April about the Tree Bank item; he also floated an idea of planting some trees in the fall using Tree Bank funds. Lastly, Hower shared with the group that he found a board game, similar to Monopoly, called LeesburgOpoly where the Historic Tree Walk from the Tree Commission is mentioned in the game.

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ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Groothuis asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 PM.

Motion to approve adjournment: Groothuis

Second: Marshall

Carried: 7 – 0 – 0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.