

Forest Conservation Advisory Committee
Minutes
June 17, 2014

ATTENDEES

Members

Mark Buscaino
Jean Cavanaugh
Laura Miller (DEP), ex officio
David Myers
Katherine Nelson, (M-NCPPC), ex officio
Michael Osmun
John Pierson
Kathleen Samiy
Jeff Schwartz
Jason Sheer
Doug Sievers (WSSC), ex officio
Rosanne Skirble
Dan Snyder

Absent Members

Carole Ann Barth
Elizabeth Beck
Bob Benson
Andrew Der
Rebecca Harris
David Kuykendall (DPS), ex officio
Dan Landry
Brett Linkletter (DPWT), ex officio
David Plummer (MSCD), ex officio

Others attending

Michael Knapp, MC DPS
Gwen Bausmith, MC DEP

MINUTES

The Forest Conservation Advisory Committee met as scheduled on June 17, 2014.

The committee provided the following takeaways/valuable lessons/great ideas received during May's panel discussion of tree planting programs in the region for DEP to consider throughout the development of planting programs to implement the Tree Canopy Law.

- Encourage owners to choose their own tree and choose it wisely.
- Inform/educate landowners of big trees and why they provide so much more than little trees.
- When selecting the type of tree; focus on diversity of tree species. Add a structure to the planting program that includes a multitude of species and encourages citizens to plant a variety of trees.
- Reduce confusion about all of the different County tree programs. Streamline the programs and make their purposes/missions clear to the public. Stress outreach efforts to make it clear. Make a ONE-STOP shop.
- Need to educate the community about what programs are out there, what their options are for obtaining/planting trees.
- Prevention/education programs should be targeted toward alerting homeowners to understand more about conserving trees. There are misconceptions about "dangers" of trees and it would be beneficial to clarify what types of trees are hazardous, how to care for trees, etc. Unfortunately there are no programs in place that observe trees prior to complaints being issued about potential hazardous situations. Stop healthy trees from being removed.
 - Outreach to inspectors as well as general public.

- One-stop shop on the website where the public can get all of the information: education, tree programs, ask an expert, what to do if you have a hazardous tree, etc. Branding, correct/logical sequencing is important. Try to limit the message to three key words to better market the message.
- Create an annual opportunity to bring together annual measures. Use the Trees Matter conference from Department of Parks as a way for all of these groups to get together and do a yearly measure of what they've done. Is it possible to communicate the collective success of all parties in an annual panel that's open to the public? Sort of like an annual conference, but on a slightly smaller scale. This is very similar to components of the 100,000 Trees campaign.
- After care education is important.
- Are there programs available to improve soil conditions in areas where we could plant trees? Highly urban areas often are not ideal for planting due to lack of rich, healthy soil. DEP may explore this topic more in the future, but it's not on the radar for this next year.
- Education: Include a wide variety of articles, press releases, school programs to reach different audiences. Find out target audiences, structure messages, and find best ways to distribute those messages to those specific audiences.
- Can FCAC not only discuss the options within the committee but also help educate the public directly? Through civic associations, articles, non-profit groups. Maybe the committee, or DEP, could develop standard PowerPoints, presentations, video, fact sheets, to be presented by committee members, tree stewards, etc., and distribute to community groups.
- Make sure if we're selling trees, we have trees to distribute! In other words, don't outstrip our ability to deliver. The public will be disappointed/angry if we advertise them, they want them, and we can't deliver them.
- Data could be really useful to move programs forward and improve programs. One interesting way to sort data is by zip code.
- "Each tree that you plant, you need to form a relationship with."
- The supply of trees generally available from nurseries is not as diverse as it could be.

During this discussion, the committee also noted the following:

- DEP could develop a strategic plan that will lay out projects, timelines, benefits, who does what. Could be beneficial to have that list of information and strategies written down to keep track and benefit future members of the Committee as they come in and out. Could include projects like the type listed above.
- The committee should invite representatives of Pepco to a future meeting to discuss their tree maintenance programs.

Katherine Nelson presented and discussed the annual report for the Forest Conservation Law.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2014.