

Forest Conservation Advisory Committee

Minutes

September 20, 2011

Prepared by: David Post

ATTENDEES

Members

Paul Allen (WSSC), ex officio
Ginny Barnes
Mark Buscaino
Andrew Der
Ken Ferebee
Kim Knox
Dan Landry
Brett Linkletter (DPWT), ex officio
Caren Madsen
Laura Miller (DEP), ex officio
Katherine Nelson, (M-NCPPC), ex officio
Michael Norton
David Plummer (MSCD), ex officio

David Post
Linda Silversmith
Dan Snyder
Bryan Straathof
Clark Wagner

Absent members

Norman Mease
Jeff Schwartz
Kevin Smith

MINUTES

Call to order

Caren Madsen called to order the regular meeting of the **Forest Conservation Advisory Committee** at **7:00 PM** on Sept. 20, 2011

Approval of minutes from last meeting

The June 22, 2011 minutes were approved as submitted with a motion by David Post and seconded by David Plummer. The July 19, 2011 minutes were approved with one amendment with a motion by Linda Silversmith and second by Clark Wagner.

Open forum

- a) An issue regarding solar panels and a request by a homeowner to prune a tree to allow the solar panels to receive more sunlight was brought up. Discussion included the conflict of environmental goals, shade and canopy vs. solar energy development. Federal and state regulations may allow or require trees to be pruned to allow sufficient solar access. Takoma Park provides an example of this conflict and it was suggested that the City Arborist may be a future speaker on this subject. **Action item:** Brett will contact Eric Coffman with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection for more on this subject.

- b) It was announced that a Clean Energy Seminar sponsored by Clean Currents is in the works and a briefing from the President of the Council of Silver Spring Civic Organizations.
- c) It was reported that Conservation Montgomery held an Open House and several public officials attended. Conservation Montgomery is also working with a Cub Scout troop on a Nov. 5th tree-planting project in Montgomery Hills in Silver Spring. Trees will be donated by CM board member Mike Rubin.
- d) It was reported that county rebates are available for residents who retrofit their homes for energy efficiency. An energy audit is required. One company that provides that is Eco Beco. For more information, contact Eric Coffman, Department of Environmental Protection.
- e) The issue of over-mulching on trees on public property such as school properties was raised. Discussion centered around the lack of trained landscape personnel at public schools.
- f) Plans for a fall tree planting opportunity at the Oaks Landfill site in early November were announced. This past spring, 700 trees were planted and diligently watered. Funding is provided through a Chesapeake Bay Fund Grant.
- g) It was reported that a tree planting project on Watts Branch across from the water filtration plant will benefit from volunteer help this fall.
- h) Casey Trees efforts regarding the Emerald Ash Borer were reported.

Administrative business

Technical item: Laura Miller reported that the membership terms of Paul Allen, Andrew Der, Brett Linkletter, Norman Mease Laura Miller, Dave Post, Dan Snyder, and Bryan Straathof will expire at the end of this year. **Action item:** Those members may reapply for the open seats however the vacancies will be advertised. Information will be forwarded to everyone.

Agenda Topic:

Tree Canopy Analysis: Katherine Nelson presented the Tree Canopy Analysis prepared by the University of Vermont for Montgomery County and how the analysis can be used to identify tree planting opportunities on public school sites. She indicated that it is not very helpful as a broad analysis but gets better in refined views. Overall, the 2008 Forest Cover was 29% and represent full layered forest. The 2009 Canopy Cover including forest was 50% and is very fragmented. As an example, she presented the results of canopy at twenty (20) county public schools. The Canopy Cover ranged from less than 10% to over 60%. The average is about 22% for all public schools. Twenty one (21) schools have less than 10% and 4 have more than 50%.

Discussion centered on the variables of each site including education level, total site area, newly planted vs. older schools, ability of the program to recognize reforestation areas and consideration of overlapping uses such as adjacent parks. It was suggested that MCPS officials are concerned about encumbering the school properties with forest conservation easements than could affect future expansion.

- I. **Action item:** A subcommittee including David Plummer, Dan Landry, Ginny Barnes and Kimberly Knox will draft a letter to the Superintendent of Schools with copies to the County Council and County Executive referencing environmental education - “No Child Left Inside” – suggesting the use of community service hours be used for tree planting and maintenance on school properties and educating maintenance staff on the importance and techniques of properly maintaining trees on school property. Additionally, the letter will suggest that innovative ideas could be implemented to preserve existing canopy during and after construction. The Rainscapes program has assisted some schools with conservation landscape and rain garden projects but no tree planting projects.

New Business:

A request to brief the FCAC was made by Barbara Schubert of Silver Spring. This is regarding fourteen (14) trees that died presumably due to natural gas leaks. No action taken as yet. Caren has contacted Ms. Schubert about attending a future FCAC meeting and briefing the committee on her neighborhood problem.

The planned speaker for the October 18th meeting is Bob Hoyt who will provide an update on the proposed Montgomery Tree Bill/Forest Conservation Law. Comments on the DEP draft legislation have been provided by the environmental and building communities to the County Executive.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49PM
Minutes prepared by Dave Post