

**Minutes of the Tree and Landscape Board
City of College Park
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 7:00PM**

<u>Term Exp.</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
N/A	Brenda Alexander, Public Works Assistant Director	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04/30/2021	John Lea-Cox, City Forester	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04/30/2021	Christine O'Brien, member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10/31/2021	James Meyer, member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04/09/2021	Janet Wagner, member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04/30/2021	Rashawna Alfred, member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
04/30/2021	Todd Reitzel, member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dylan Burns, CBE, representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Caroline Wick, CBE representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Also Present: Kim Finch, Environmental Planning, MNCPPC
Denise Mitchell, District 4 Councilmember
Fazlul Kabir, District 1 Councilmember
Llatetra Esters, District 2 Councilmember
John Rigg, District 3 Councilmember
Terry Schum, City Planning
Susan Whitney, Guest
Carleveva Thompson, Contract Secretary

Ms. Alexander called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

- 1. Approval of Meeting Agenda:** The agenda for the September 15, 2021 meeting was reviewed.

Motion: Accept agenda as presented.

Moved: Dr. Lea-Cox

Second: Mr. Reitzel

Aye: Unanimous

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

- 2. Discussion with Ms. Kim Finch, Environmental Planning, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)**

Ms. Finch provided the Board an overview of the tree ordinances that are established within Prince Georges County: the Woodland Conservation Act, the Tree Canopy ordinance, and the Landscape Manual. The Landscape Manual is a subcategory under the zoning ordinance and the Tree Canopy ordinance is intended to encourage re-planting in areas that are already developed. A summary transcript of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

- 3. Approval of August Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the August 19, 2021 meeting were reviewed and edits were made to the minutes.

Motion: Accept meeting minutes as amended.

Moved: Dr. Lea-Cox

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Aye: Unanimous **Nay:** 0 **Abstain:** 0

4. Public Works Department Report: Ms. Alexander shared the following highlights:

- Good Neighbor Day is scheduled for Saturday, November 13, 2021. A call for projects is now open.
- Plans to submit a project to create a pollinator planting in the median at Cherokee St. And 49th Place as well as adding to the Guilford run project of stream cleanup.
- Received the compost screener and now have compost available.
- The Department will have clean up month in October and will be scheduled on 3 Saturdays, October 2nd, October 16th and October 23rd from 8AM – 12PM.
- Bulbs and pansies have been ordered.
- Finalizing the street tree replacement order and approximately 50 street trees will be replaced.
- Mosquito spraying will begin in the evening on September 15 – 16th.
- RFP has been advertised for the Odessa park project and Ms. Alexander will be the project manager.

5. CBE Report: Ms. Alexander shared the following highlights on current CBE projects:

- The signs arrived at DPW for the labeling of the trees on the trolley trail and a walkthrough will be conducted on September 24th to identify where to place the signs.
- Currently working with the Bee City Committee on submitting a proposal to the City Council for “no mow” month in April.

6. New Business

- Suggested articles for the Municipal Scene were watering, mulching, and pruning.

7. Next Meeting Date

- The next scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

8. Adjourn

- Dr. Lea-Cox motioned to adjourn the meeting. Second by Ms. O’Brien. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Addendum: Summary of Ms. Finch Presentation to TLB at September 15, 2021 meeting

Three ordinances that work together to maintain and build tree canopy in PG County:

1. Woodland Conservation Act – based on the state forest conservation act
 - a. Only applies to parcels greater than 40,000 square feet, with a certain amount of trees on the site, or you are exempt from this provision
2. Tree Canopy Ordinance – encourages replanting within the areas that are developed. There is a certain percentage requirement based on the development size, generally 10 or 15 percent
3. Landscape Manual – sub-category under the Zoning Ordinance, also applies to permitting.
 - a. Addresses street trees, parking lot planting requirements, buffer zone trees

Woodland is defined by the state as 10,000 square feet of forestry cover.

Woodland Conservation Act applies to the University of Maryland, state projects, private projects, MNCPPC – but not federal projects.

Every development must comply with the Act, unless they have an exemption, or a tree conservation plan. Exemptions: site is less than 40,000 square feet; or the site is larger than 40,000 square feet but contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodlands.

- Standard exemption (due to be being too small) – County receives about 150 a year
- Numbered (special) exemption – County receives 20 to 50 a year.

PGAtlas maps are used to track projects that have an approved special exemption.

In Prince George's County the tree canopy coverage has slightly increased around the beltway.

Montgomery County has a tree ordinance for private land property.

PG County's Climate Action Commission will be issuing a Climate Action Plan soon (around December 2021) to address increasing tree canopy coverage – being chaired by the PG County Department of the Environment (DOE).

State of Maryland has adopted a plan to plant 5 million trees in the last legislation session.

A tree conservation plan is not an implementation document, it identifies where it is best to retain woodlands. This is approved by the Planning Board or other approving authority during a development project.

There are specific replacement requirements for trees taken down during development.

1. On-site preservation, on-site planting, on-site natural regeneration, and on-site landscaping.
2. Off-site woodland conservation banks for preservation, planting, or regeneration.
3. Fee in Lieu is the least preferred, and is only for one acre or less. 90 cents a square foot – about \$50,000 an acre.

The Woodland Conservation Fund collects Fee in Lieu in association with development projects. The Prince George's DOE Grants are available through a matching program to municipalities.

On-site mitigation options have to be employed to the most extent possible. But that is difficult for the dense zoning sites. PG County could make it tougher for off-site mitigation, then the developer would have to demonstrate why they can't make it on site. However, the County Development Plan tends to be seen as more important than on-site mitigation. DOE tends to get overruled by the County Council because the Council want the development project to move forward, which results in all the mitigation going off-site.

MNCPPC has some further replanting planned in Fall 2021 as a result of the airport clearing, and Ms. Finch said she will press the parks department to ensure the mitigation occurs within City limits.

If the City has some priority areas where canopy coverage is needed, MNCPPC could aim to replant there.

PG County mitigation banks are privately owned property and are voluntary. Participation includes an easement placed on the property to commit the owner to maintain the trees. State ordinance says 1 acre is minimum for woodland conservation banks. Neighbors could partner together to create an easement to make their land available for planting. Most woodland conservation banks are in rural areas of PG County.

There is a conservation network in the Green Infrastructure Plan where 2 acres of preservation are required for every acre cleared.

PG County has not partnered with the University of Maryland on mitigation planting. University of Maryland plans are reviewed by the State, not MNCPPC.

Prince George's DOE contracts with the Neighborhood Design Center to design projects for schools in PG County. There are 6 major schools in the County that are currently undergoing major design renovations, but possibly none in College Park. Trying to incorporate tree planting in groups on school sites.

The City of Glenarden managed to leverage funding from a previous mall development project and developed a street-tree master plan and planting plan, by lobbying the County Council. Glenarden requested the fee-in-lieu funds for their City rather than going to the County. Ms. Finch said she can show us some other examples of this. If College Park wanted to take that route in conjunction with a specific project, it would be best to have a Master Plan in place, to use the fee in lieu money for urban tree planting. Glenarden got over \$500,000 fee in lieu funds from the mall project.

PG County does not necessarily want the fee in lieu funds, because they have excess money in the account. DOE is not spending the money as fast as it is coming in. Municipal matching grant program provide low funding levels; maximum \$10,000.

Can we request money that was paid in lieu from past projects? Maybe. If it is not implemented by the jurisdiction that receives the money within 2 years, the developer can ask for the money back to implement it, but developers have not asked for it back. DOE wants the money to be spent within the community.

Prince George's Climate Action Commission Plan report was due Sept 30, and have asked for an extension to the end of the year (December 2021).

Ms. Finch will circle back with the TLB on where/when MNCPPC plans to have the mitigation completed from the airport clearance project.