



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON

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Tree Advisory Board (TAB)
MEETING MINUTES
June 2, 2022, 4pm

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Tree Advisory Board) was held on Thursday, June 2, 2022, 4:15 pm at the Memorial Room, City Hall and via zoom. The hybrid meeting was livestreamed and recorded.

Attendance

Voting members: Eveline Feldmann, Chair • Marlene H. Wertheim, Vice Chair • Vincent DeVito • Marlon Molina. **Absent:** Henry May. **Others:** Elias Gootzeit • Shayne Brooks.

AGENDA

1 – Approval of Minutes

Minutes of May 26, 2022. Motion by Marlene, seconded by Marlon. All were in favor to accept the documents as is.

2 – Tree Removal Permit – needed tree ordinance modifications

The TAB approved outline of changes for TO amendments draft was submitted to the legal division. Mr. Alba was asked to mark-up the Tree Ordinance with the desired changes so that it can be reviewed by the TAB before being submitted to the Commissioner for their approval.

3 – Reports

3.1 Chair: The issue of posting our agenda, minutes and video links has yet to be resolved. Our earlier assistance was pulled but, hopefully, will soon be restored.

3.2 The Tree Surgeon/DPW updates: Vinny DeVito is reporting about

- Beautification at the Lincoln/Gramatan Roundabout. The old barberry shrubs have been removed and are being replaced with boxwood which is easy to maintain. Roses will be at the foot of the fountain. Vinny noted that 2 of the six cherry trees still waiting for planting at the Arbor Day site along South 4th Avenue have been used here on islands of the roundabout, leaving us 4.

- Water tank – DPW took an old trailer and set up a water tank to be used at future tree plantings.

- 4 pear trees for South Columbus – They are at the DPW yard waiting for the Commissioner to decide when they will be put into the ground. The neighborhood association's dedication date is set for August 2. Vinny will let us know of a scheduling update.

-Tree removal permits – Vinny addressed the community inquiries about the tree removal on Oak and Gramatan. It was a dead tree and a matter between a private owner and Con Edison. He explained that Con Ed supersedes any City assessment regarding a tree that can be dangerous. Discussion followed about how to proceed regarding a permit when there is an immediate need to remove a tree.

3.3 Planning Dept. Representative updates: Marlon Molina will consult with the Commissioner about setting up an in-office meeting with him and the grants team which is under this department. We learned that the role of Planning Administrator (Bob Galvin) remains in place and that the new Assistant Commissioner's specific purview is the Comprehensive Plan.

4 – Tree Planting Program 2022/23

4.1. Electronification of tree planting lists. The goal is to put all our lists together in the computer so that we can have a map to guide our decisions concerning future plantings. It was agreed that we shouldn't prioritize active communities over less organized ones. The chair wants to bring in the use of heat and canopy mapping data as well. It was suggested that the TAB initiate an educational campaign to target those areas that need trees and aren't currently engaged.

4.2. South 4th Ave. planting of 2nd set of 6 cherry trees. The TAB has outreached to the Board of Education on numerous occasions, with the assistance of the City Clerk. Since a decision was still outstanding, and the trees need to be planted, our group discussed and unanimously agreed to go ahead and stake them out in the public space on South Fourth Ave extending our tree line at both ends, including further up by the school entrance. As noted, there are now only 4 cherry trees available. Vinny wondered about placing 3 more of them by the church at the roundabout. He was reminded that they are still committed for South 4th Ave. and that, for the future, it would be good to discuss putting a tree order together for the right trees in the right place. In this way, we can avoid a shortage of trees for a location we have already committed to.

4.3. Stuyvesant Plaza Park Restauration. A new stump grinder was announced to arrive by June 16. After removal of a stump in front of City Hall, Stuyvesant stumps will be next. With that done, replanting grass and tree replacements can begin. Eveline has completed and shared a stump and missing tree count in a drawing of the park median area, as a jump start for the planning process and discussions.

5 – Announcements

- Next regular TAB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 4 p.m. It will be a hybrid meeting, livestreamed.

-Reminder: NYS is seeking public input as it drafts Disadvantaged Communities Criteria to assist in the implementation of NY's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act <https://climate.ny.gov/DAC-Criteria>. In-person and virtual hearings are being held throughout the state. The Lower Hudson Valley hearing will be held Friday, June 10, 2022, 6 p.m. Grace Baptist Church, 52 South 5th Ave., Mt. Vernon.

-There is an upcoming Cornell webinar that will help communities map heat that can help with ways to adapt to high summer temperatures. Extreme heat is dangerous and people in neighborhoods that lack tree canopy and green spaces are at higher risk for heat-related illness. Community Heat Mapping with Climate Engine. Speaker Andrew Reinmann, Ph.D., CUNY Hunter College. Friday, June 24, 1-2 pm
Registration: https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar//register/WN_cFg6mfHVSO2C_iJQoqfZsQ

Meeting adjourned at 5:11p.m., moved by Vinny, seconded, by Marlon. The recording of this meeting is accessible with this link: <https://www.facebook.com/mountvernonny/videos/tree-advisory-board-meeting/360310939528577>


Eveline Feldmann, Chair

07/07/22
Date of Approval