

Winterville Tree Commission

Monday, March 22, 2021, 7:00 PM

Online via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Present: Lea Clark (Chair), Brian Binder (Secretary), Bob Bonsall (Treasurer), Dorset Trapnell, Mateo Fennell (City Arborist, ex-officio), Seth Hawkins (GA Forestry Commission, ex-officio)

Approval of Minutes

The January 25, 2021 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

New Business

WTC Gazette Page

Lea had written and circulated a draft; a few minor changes were offered. Thanks Lea!

Arbor Day Debriefing

The event went very well – it was a beautiful day, some people beyond the WTC were there, and the tree planting went smoothly (thanks to Mateo, Bob, and Seth). The tree looks great!

While there, Mateo & Seth looked at two trees near the BBQ building. The post oak isn't looking good; Seth says it's moderate- to high-risk; it will probably be taken down. The white oak is in better shape; Mateo intends to give it some care and hopefully it can be preserved.

George Chandler Park

Our 1/29 walk-through with Mateo was informative. The mayor joined us briefly and expressed support for saving the water oak adjacent to the depot parking area. There is some concern about the stability of that tree once the pavement is removed, and about possible damage during the removal itself. The condition of the roots will also need to be assessed at that time. Mateo is currently formulating a plan for dealing with the tree.

It appears that the weeping willow in front of the bookstore may need to be taken down for the drainage part of the project.

The formal ground breaking for the park will be (was) Wed 3/24; actual work will begin a week or two later.

Fall Educational Event: Partnering with Athens Tree Council Education Committee

The Athens Tree Council's Education Committee is planning on an educational tree ID event this fall ("Trick or Trees") at Sandy Creek Nature Center. (Holly is on this committee, and helping to organize the event.) Tentative date: Sat. Oct 30 10:00 AM -12:30 PM.

We haven't ever partnered with the Athens Tree Council; it seems like a good idea to do so.

A motion to partner with Athens Tree Council's Education Committee on this event passed 4-0.
▶ Lea will liaise with them.

There was additional discussion about planning our own event as well. Possibilities include something around the Firefly Trail, a round-up of tree-related resources [Seth], "50 ways to kill a tree: info-graphic [Mateo]. These latter two might be 'serialized' on our Gazette page.

Bob suggested doing a tour of commemorative trees and inviting donors to speak about the people who are commemorated. ▶ This will be discussed at our next meeting.

Friends of Pittard Park (Bob)

The idea is modeled after the Tree Stewards program we have talked about – participants would help maintain the wildlife area of the park, and in return would receive education/training. This would help fulfill the WTC educational role. There was general enthusiasm for the idea. One model would be to give each participant a particular area to care for. Mateo suggested that a 'work days' model might be better, at least initially. Whatever the structure, it would probably make sense to wait until late summer to begin.

▶ Bob & Mateo will get together to talk about this; we'll discuss again at our next meeting.

Firefly Trail News (Bob)

The ACC Commission voted to keep the FFT on the old RR bed in the disputed area. This will eliminate some serious road crossings, but will encroach on some private property. The trail will cross Moores Grove Rd. just behind Off the Vine to connect with the Winterville section. Some trees will certainly be taken down – probably nothing too old, being mostly tress that have grown up since the RR bed was abandoned – but nevertheless they are part of our canopy. There is a cut similar to the one on N. Georgia Ave, along which a lot of trees were lost (although Mateo allowed that at this point "everything is done dying"). This will be the last section in Clarke County to be completed – and may be delayed by legal wrangling. The prospects for the trail in Oglethorpe is uncertain at present.

Fundraising Idea: Tree Sales

Jefferson has a tree sale program that might serve as a model for us. This is run on a pre-order basis, so problems with extra / un-purchased trees are avoided (this has been a serious issue for e.g. the Athens tree council, who have abandoned their program). Seth believes that Jefferson gets 3-5 gal trees for \$10-\$15 from Angel Creek Nursery, adds a small markup, and gets some money. He thinks that the program isn't run so much as a money-maker but rather for canopy development. One issue is how to effectively advertise / get the order form out to potential buyers. ▶ Lea will contact the Jefferson City Arborist, Susan Russell, to get more information.

Seth is leaving...

He's actually already moved to Rome, but he'll remain our Community Forester until June or July. Once his replacement is named, he'll be sure to invite that person to our next meeting.

Seth has been with the WTC since its inception, and has been an amazing partner. We'll miss him!

Larry Morris memorials

Dr. Morris taught in the Warnell School for 35 years. If you're interested in contributing, Lea can provide more information.

Tree City of the World

The program has printable swag that might be appropriate to give to the City, if we had a budget! They are also collecting photos for a video (►Lea will send them some), and have offered to attend an Urban Forestry event in 2021 to recognize Winterville. Finally, they would like us to participate in a virtual meet & greet. ►Lea will contact them to schedule this; she and Dorsett will attend. If you want to join them, let Lea know.

Arborist's Update

In addition to the information mentioned above, Mateo reports:

- A total of about 50 Commemorative trees have been planted this season.
- Mateo is taking responsibility for maintaining the wildlife area in Pittard Park.
- Mateo and Seth have identified a water oak off Smokey Rd. that is likely the national champion! ►They will work on the paperwork for this.
This could possibly serve as the basis for a green space acquisition.
Lea reports that Athens is in the process of updating their champion tree list – this water oak should definitely be included.
[Note added 4/29/21: Seth reports that this tree turns out to be a willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), so not a champion.]

Our next meeting is set for Monday, May 17, 2021 at 7:00 PM on Zoom. This will be a public meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:15 PM.