

Winterville Tree Commission

Mon., December 20, 2021, 6:00 PM
via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Present: Lea Clark (Chair), Brian Binder (Secretary), Bob Bonsall (Treasurer), Mateo Fennell

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the Aug. 26, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

New Business

MLK Day of Service: 1/17/22 9:00 AM

It was recognized that we need to coordinate with Tom Doonan on this, and agreed that it makes sense to provide Tom with a list of potential tasks that we would like to undertake. Tom can presumably provide tools from the City, as can Lea from the GFC. Lea already put this event in our latest Gazette piece.

- ▶ Everyone: Please send task ideas to Lea
- ▶ Brian will post the event on the WTC web page and City Calendar, and talk to Jonathan Scott about possibly getting it on the marquee.

Tree City USA and Tree City of the World recertifications

Lea is waiting on some paperwork from City Hall, but then these applications are ready to go. Mateo estimates that 50+ trees were planted over the past year – this may qualify us for the Growth Award as well.

[All three applications were completed and submitted as of 12/22/21 – thanks Lea!]

Dedication of George Chandler Park 10/14/21 (information item)

The dedication went well. The tree for George has been dedicated and has a plaque. Due to covid concerns, we previously cancelled the WTC activities that had originally been planned around this event.

City Arborist

A city arborist is required for Tree City USA & Tree City of the World program certification. Furthermore, trees around the city require continuing care. Bob hasn't gotten a chance to talk to the Mayor and invite him to one of our meetings to discuss appointing a city arborist. There was general agreement that the City needs an arborist, though this wouldn't necessarily be a full-time position – part-time or contractual would be ok. Our Tree Ordinance establishes the "role of city arborist," but doesn't appear to require the city to hire someone to fill this role. Thus far, no qualified people approached by WTC members have been interested in taking on this role.

Mateo said he might be willing to do some tree maintenance on a volunteer basis, though there was some concern about liability issues.

► Lea will try to find out about the City's insurance regarding volunteers.

TSPLOST 2023 Proposal (Information item)

Bob submitted our proposal for a perimeter trail in Pittard Park to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), where it was well received. At this point, the projects under consideration by the CAC do not exceed the projected overall budget. That CAC will soon forward its recommendations to the Mayor and Council. If the recommendations are adopted by the Council and if TSPLOT passes, the actual projects that are undertaken will essentially be at the prerogative of Mayor & Council, so we will likely need to continue advocating for this project.

Oct. 30th Tree ID event at Sandy Creek (Information item)

Lea reported that the event was a great success. It was well attended and the participants seemed to really enjoy it. The weather was wonderful. Door prizes were given out, including seedlings of the Tree-That-Owns-Itself. Holly was one of the group leaders.

Next Educational Event?

There was a consensus that given the uncertainty regarding covid, and the fact that planning takes significant time and energy, we ought not to schedule our next event at the present time.

Tree Species List

Lea reports that the ACC Tree Council has recently updated the county tree list, and that we should perhaps do the same. At very least it would probably make sense to make sure that our list and theirs do not conflict. It was agreed that we would do this individually to start. Getting the current list on a sharable Google Sheets spreadsheet might make sense.

As a way to get this started ► Lea will collate and distribute a list of the recent changes that the Athens Tree Council has made.

Arbor Day 2022

We need someone to coordinate this. Lea can't do it because Arbor Day is very busy for GFC. It was suggested that we plant Seth's tree that day, but he too may be too busy to attend. (Lea has the tree at work, a swamp chestnut that Seth himself raised.) We will discuss further at our next meeting.

New Members

We are in serious need of new members. It was suggested that we do a booth at the Marigold Market to raise awareness. Mateo thought his neighbor might be interested, ► he will check.

Commemorative Tree Program

The Mayor had suggested that this program might be coordinated by the WTC. There was general acknowledgment that this is still very much Tom's baby, and that at present we might best help by suggesting appropriate locations for new plantings (e.g. the auditorium and Chandler Park were mentioned).

- ▶ Everyone: Please send Lea suggestions for future Commemorative Tree locations. Include an explanation/justification that she can forward to Tom.

Tree Inventory update

Lea updated the Winterville tree inventory last year, but we don't have the ArcGIS credentials to access it. Seth is working with his IT people to get the data exported, at which point we could use QGIS (a free open-source GIS resource) to access it. QGIS is good, but has some drawbacks that Seth may be able to tell us about at a future meeting.

Bob has completed the inventory of all commemorative trees, in Google Sheets. He could add the trees in the GIS database if that data were exported in an appropriate format.

Steve Rice has created a beautifully drawn map of commemorative trees that might be worth posting or displaying in some way, though it probably isn't fully up to date.

2022 Officers

By general consent, Brian's term as Secretary and Bob's as Treasurer were extended through 2022.

Lea is unable to continue as Chair. No volunteers for this position were forthcoming, though Bob might be willing to act as interim "care-taker" chair if need be.

For the time being we agreed that we would operate under a Co-Chair model, with the Chair's duties divided among members. These duties include assembling meeting agendas, running meetings, writing Gazette entries, etc.

- ▶ Lea will get the agenda together for our next meeting (1/31/22)
- ▶ Mateo will run that meeting
- ▶ Mateo will also write the next Gazette entry (deadline is early/mid March); Lea is willing to do future entries.
- ▶ Lea will do the yearly WTC update to City Council early next year

Our next meeting is set for Mon., January 31, 2022 at 5:00 PM via Zoom. This will be a public meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:25 PM.