



To: Westminster Tree Commission

From: Andrew R. Gray, Comprehensive Planner

cc: Mark A. Depo, Director of Community Planning and Development
Eric Schlitzer, City Arborist
Samantha Schlitzer, Executive Assistant

Date: June 5, 2020

Subject: Summary of Agenda Items

The following is a brief summary of the New Business Agenda Items for the June 10, 2020 Westminster Tree Commission (“Commission”) meeting:

- A. **Tree Buffer Planting along Cops Branch** – The Chair will provide a summary of the item during the meeting.
- B. **2020 Urban and Community Forestry Workshop** – Up until 2019, the City and Bartlett Tree Experts have been conducting the Urban and Community Forestry Workshop. It is understood that Bartlett Tree Experts will now be taking the lead for conducting the 2020 Urban and Community Forestry workshop (workshop) and subsequent workshops. The City will now have a smaller role in workshops such as sending out information for registration. On May 20, 2020, Community Planning and Development (CPD) staff contacted Bartlett to discuss the 2020 workshop and to see if the workshop could be presented virtually due to COVID-19. Bartlett was receptive to conducting the 2020 workshop virtually. They will provide more information during the meeting and would like to get the Commission's thoughts on the possibility of a virtual meeting. The Commission should also discuss the date for any workshop and any back-up dates to give Bartlett, CPD and City staff flexibility.
- C. **2020 Arbor Day Celebration** – Due to COVID-19, the City was unable to host the annual Arbor Day Celebration this spring. The City is committed to hosting some type of celebration this year to commemorate Arbor Day. On May 20, 2020, I spoke with Ms. Anne Gilbert, CC-P, from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Forest Service. Ms. Gilbert mentioned that other communities have expressed interest in conducting a digital Arbor Day Celebration or conducting an Arbor Day Celebration during the six month Arbor Day anniversary, which would be Saturday, October 24, 2020. Both types of celebrations would be live streamed on the City Facebook Page. However, the digital celebration would only involve CPD and City staff and no participants. I would like to note that Ms. Gilbert reminded me that this year is the 30th year the City has been recognized as a Tree City! Congratulations Westminster!!!

D. **Review of the City Comprehensive Tree Plan** – Pursuant to Chapter 148 Trees, Section 6 A., of the Charter and Code of the City of Westminster:

“It shall be the responsibility of the City Tree Commission to study, investigate, counsel, develop and/or update annually and recommend to the Mayor and Common Council a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas. Such plan will be presented annually to the Mayor and Common Council. Upon its review, the Mayor and Common Council may modify and amend such proposed plan and adopt it by resolution as the official comprehensive City tree plan.”

On February 25, 2019, the Mayor and Common Council voted to approve Resolution No. 19-08 “Adopting a City of Westminster Comprehensive Tree Plan”. CPD staff would like the Commission to review the Comprehensive Tree Plan and provide any comments they may have to improve this plan. CPD and City staff will also review the Comprehensive Tree Plan and provide comments. CPD staff would like to receive comments from the Commission no later than Monday, August 3, 2020 so the comments may be incorporated into a draft document for the Commission to review and possibly approve during their September 2020 meeting.

Link to the [City of Westminster, Comprehensive Tree Plan](#)

E. **2020 Commission Elections** – Pursuant to Chapter 148 Trees, Section 5 A.:

“The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. Both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson shall be elected by the members of the Commission and will hold such offices at the pleasure of the Mayor and Common Council.”

Currently there are no known Commission rules to dictate what month the Commission shall conduct its election. The Commission has not conducted an election since at least 2015, and since this time, one new Commission member has been appointed by the Mayor and subsequently confirmed by the Common Council.

In the month of May, the Planning and Zoning Commission conducts elections pursuant to their rules. CPD staff recommends that the timing of elections for the Tree Commission be consistent with the timing of the Planning and Zoning Commission elections for the purpose of tracking and consistency of City commissions. Since the Commission meets quarterly, June would be the most appropriate time to conduct such elections.

Request:

CPD staff requests the Tree Commission elect from its members a Chair and Vice-Chair.

The following is a brief summary of CPD staff comments for the June 10, 2020 Tree Commission meeting:

Tree Commission Rules – Pursuant to Chapter 148 Trees, Section 5 B.:

“The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure and keep a record of the proceedings.”

Currently there are no known Commission rules. CPD staff plans to draft a set of proposed rules for the Commission to review in the Month of September 2020.

Arbor Week Tree Plantings – Mr. Schlitzer mentioned that he planted four trees for Arbor Week. He planted a Service Berry at 65 West Main Street and at 149 Pennsylvania Ave; a Hawthorne at 119 Pennsylvania Ave.; and a Cherry tree on Pennsylvania Avenue. More information will be forthcoming during the meeting. Photos of two of the four plantings are below.



Service Berry at 65 West Main Street



Hawthorne at 119 Pennsylvania Avenue