



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, December 12, at 5:00 p.m.

Whitehall House and Gardens

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements –Henry Heuser, Jr., Co-Chair

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, “Commission” or “LMTAC”) members were present: Henry Heuser (Co-Chair), Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Allen Steinbock (Secretary-Treasurer), Paul Cappiello, Robert Eberenz, Jr., Maria Koetter, Shane Corbin, Scott Hannah, Amy Johnson, Aaron Boggs, and Betsy Ruhe, as well as Ex-Officio Commissioners Mesude Duyar, Sherie’ Long, Michelle King, and Mark White.

Co-Chair Henry Heuser brought the meeting to order introduced the new members of the Commission: Betsy Ruhe and Amy Johnson. He then asked for a general round of introductions.

II. Approval of Minutes – Katy Schneider, Co-Chair

Co-Chair Katy Schneider asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting.

III. Old Business

Secretary-Treasurer Allen Steinbock reported that there have been \$1,100 in donations to the Tree Fund so far.

IV. New Business

a. The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky – Kris Sirchio, President

Henry introduced Kris Sirchio, President of the Nature Conservancy of Kentucky. Kris began by saying that the Nature Conservancy is looking to take on more signature projects throughout the state, including in Louisville. Kris stated that the Conservancy understands how important trees are to mitigating environmental challenges and that they are looking forward to seeing the results of the Commission’s tree plan. He also offered to provide any resources the Conservancy has to the Commission moving forward. Commissioner Betsy Ruhe asked what kinds of signature projects the Conservancy are looking for. Kris responded that they are looking for urban projects, but that he’s not sure what that will entail. Henry invited Kris to come back and present some projects he thinks the Conservancy might be able to collaborate with the Commission on.

Henry brought up the issue of funding for the upcoming Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and mentioned that Greg Heitzman recommended to the MSD Board that they match Metro’s level of

funding at \$50,000. Commissioner Mary Ellen Wiederwohl said we would know more about their decision in a few days.

b. A Conversation with Erin Thompson, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Louisville Metro Government

Erin began by reporting that we are currently looking for a vendor to perform the urban tree canopy assessment and that once we decide which vendor to go with, we hope to have the assessment in hand by June or July of 2014. Erin went on to tell the group about Brightside's new tree tracker that is available for the public to use to register trees.

Commissioner Rob Eberenz asked Erin what the urban tree canopy assessment would focus on. Erin replied that the assessment would cover all of Jefferson County and would highlight the areas with the most need for additional canopy. Katy added that the data collected would be at different levels, including district and census block.

Erin then said that she would appreciate all the help she can get with tracking new planting and encouraged everyone to keep her informed of group plantings. Mary Ellen noted that Erin has devised her own methodology for tracking new plantings.

Commissioner Scott Hannah asked Erin if she is looking for commercial development information regarding plantings and she said yes.

Commissioner Maria Koetter added that Public Works has recently expanded 11 tree wells in the Downtown area.

V. Committee Reports

a. Updates as Needed

Mike Hayman, Chair of the Projects Committee, began his report by saying that we are getting close to completing two important projects: 36 trees planted at Clay and Hancock and 130 trees planted at Park Duvalle. Mike also reported that there are 12 trees going in on Tyler Lane, an undetermined number of trees going in at 3rd St and Outer Loop, 18 trees going in at Brandeis Elementary, 17 trees going in at Bick Elementary, and maybe 10 – 20 trees going in at Spalding University.

Henry asked how much of the budgeted funds from Metro Government have already been spent. Mike replied that \$50,000 is going toward the project at Park Duvalle and \$150,000 is put aside for spring.

Mike went on to say that we have 150 trees donated by Eco-Tech to plant in the upcoming year and that those trees can go anywhere we see fit. Mike said that he would like to see some of those trees planted in Butchertown because many of the Bradford Pears in that neighborhood need to be taken out and replaced with a more appropriate species.

Rob asked Mike about current tree stock in our area. Mike replied that there is currently a tree scarcity. Henry added that the upcoming urban tree canopy assessment will give us a much better idea how many trees we will need.

Kris Sirchio asked how many trees the Commission thinks it will eventually need. Mary Ellen responded that the need will probably be in the six figures. Katy added that canopy percentage is a more important number to look at than number of trees.

An audience member asked if the city could use abandoned properties for tree nurseries. Mike replied that would take a lot of work, training, and money.

Valerie Magnuson added that in light of the urban heat island effect we should start looking to plant trees suited for higher temperatures. Mike replied that we are planting more “traditionally southern” trees. Commissioner Paul Cappiello stated that it can be difficult to switch to species that we are not used to planting. However, he did say that we are now planting species that we would not have dreamt of planting 20 years ago.

Audience member Larry Gettleman offered to take anyone that was interested up in his private plane if they wanted to get a better view of our canopy or lack thereof.

VI. Adjourn

At this point Henry adjourned the meeting, invited guests to stay and enjoy some refreshments, and wished everyone Happy Holidays. The next Commission meeting will be January 28, 2014.

VII. Holiday Cheer!