



Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission

March 21st, 2024

Minutes

Members in Attendance							
x	Kristen Spirl (Chair)		Lisa Ceoffe	x	Nazin Bagherynejad	x	Jim Barry
x	Marti Battistone		Raqueeb Bey		Roy Blankenship		Matthew Erb
x	James Stitt		Andrea Ketzal		Angie Martinez	x	Zinna Scott
x	Brian Wolyniak						
x	<i>Guest: Mike Kelley</i>		<i>Guest: Zachary Spodek</i>				<i>Guest:</i>
x	<i>Guest: Alex Toner (Friends of the Riverfront)</i>	x	Clara Kitongo Tree Pittsburgh	x	<i>Guest: Maggie Aupperlee</i>	x	<i>Guest: Carlos Thomas</i>

Introductions:

Brian opens the meeting at 9:07 am

Subcommittee:

Submissions from the past year have been reviewed. 16 nominations qualified as being on public property in the city. 3 were tabled for further research and discussion. 5 were voted down as they did not meet criteria. 8 were accepted as remarkable trees in one or more categories.

- Giving Tree- Tree rich with wildlife and plays key role in urban ecosystem
 - Pin Oak – Brighton Heights Park
- Pittsburgh Champion – Largest tree of its species on public property
 - Ginkgo Tree – Highland Park below super playground
 - American Elm – Allegheny Commons
 - Black Locust – Highland Park
- Tree of a Kind – Unique in appearance, origin, growth, or other aspect
 - American Sycamore – Hazelwood Greenway
 - Crabapple – Morrow Park (also specimen tree)
- Witness Tree – Tree with historical or cultural significance
 - Sawtooth Oak – Westinghouse Park
 - Oak – West End Park

Clara asks if an option can be added to the form in how people learn about the program. Carlos asks if we could reach out to KDKA regarding the Oak tree in West End Park, as it is part of their opening branding

Mike suggests formatting sign like a street/post sign to avoid issues of people tripping on it. Kristen says something like a qr code may be more suitable. Carlos suggests something like augmented reality.

Old Business:

Maggie talks about upcoming City of Pittsburgh Leadership Briefing, through the Canopy Alliance.

New Business:

Mike talks about upcoming Arbor Day celebration. Brian talks about request to plant 6 trees to mark Historical Registry Commission designation of Herron pump station (off centre ave) (\$6,000 to be done by contractors). Request funds for 2 trees to be planted at Mellon park as part of arbor day event (\$1,000). Request for company to perform air spacing of gecko tree near Phipps building (\$2,500). Total request is \$9,500. Brian asks for motion to approve the request. Marti seconds. Mike talks about how the arboretum tree will be protected during construction at Mellon Park. James abstains from voting due to it being a PWSA site. 4 in favor, one abstain. Motion carries.

Mike has request from Lisa related to the Equitable Tree Subcommittee Meeting. Mike reads out the current City of Pittsburgh Equitable Tree Planting Policy for further review, as well as the proposed Proclamation on the “Integration of Street Trees in City Sidewalk Construction and Restoration”. Alex asks if this is replacing an existing policy, and Mike says we have an existing plan, but had no operational language. Carlos asks about if people wish to plant multiple types of same tree in an area, and Mike mentions a biodiversity guideline. Clara asks about requirement for trees to be planted every so often, and how to address scenarios of trees being planted in front of resident property on public city sidewalk.

Mike talks about approval of Meeting Minutes for January. Marti Motions to approve, second by Clara. Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

Community Partners:

Clara talks about meeting with the organization “CEO”, related to tree pruning activities. Clara also says they are getting ready for tree planting season.

Alex talks about Friends of Riverfront contracting with Davey Tree to remove vines in trail area across Liberty Bridge. The hope is to use it as a proof of concept for future work.

Carlos talks about land access agreement from URA, which allows for more detailed soil testing on Mary Savage Garden. Carlos talks about conjoining Baxter and Mary Savage Park to simplify approval processes.

Mike talks about moving forward for pilots for Tree Resilience program.

Canopy Impacts:

James talks about stream restoration along Glass Run road, which involves taking down roadside shrubs and trees that will be replaced. He additionally talks about Highland Park pump station project. James talks about how reservoirs are classified as dams, as they are manmade and that the state concerned about trees affecting structural integrity of dams.

Open Forum :

Carlos asks if there is way for city council to approve commission, but Mike says the Mayor's office oversees the appointing process.

Discussion about acquiring full commission roster. Marti talks about increasing engagement efforts and discussion with DPW in an effort to acquire full commission roster, and properly advertise meetings.

Brian Motions to adjourn meeting, and Clara seconds at 10:22 am