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**January 9, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was held on Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Simini, Chair  
Marion McCarron  
Frank Lopez

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Susan Burdette, Town Commissioner  
Wayne Merkel, DNR  
Catherine Frances Butrim, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 14, 2012 meeting were approved.

Ms. Burdette stated that she researched the history and the name of Plumtree Park. She stated that she spoke with someone who interviewed a Harriet Shriver for HCPL's oral history collection and learned that plum trees were very popular in Harford County in the 1950s and 1960s. Ms. Burdette stated that plum trees also were part of the Kelly family orchards. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could consider planting a plum tree in the park.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The members present agreed to table the election of Chair and Vice Chair until the February meeting.

Fulford Avenue Right-of-Way Planting Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that there is an existing Ginkgo tree under one of the zelkova trees at the edge of the park along Fulford Avenue. He stated that he has selected a location where the Ginkgo could be relocated. The rest of the plantings will be new trees. Mr. Syphard stated that the Biloxi crape myrtle is a red flowering tree and that it will not

exceed 20'-30' in height, which will offer the ability to get closer to the sidewalk. He stated that the Princeton Sentry Ginkgo is a tall columnar tree, similar to those on Main Street about ten years ago. Mr. Merkel inquired if columnar trees are preferred. Mr. Syphard stated that columnar trees are preferred because they will allow for more plantings and there is not a lot of canopy space in the area. He stated that this planting plan will provide bright yellow foliage in the fall and red flowering color in the summer from the crape myrtles. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee will tentatively move forward with this plan as the Arbor Day project.

#### Plumtree Park Tree Planting Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that he and Charlie Dawson went to Plumtree Park to determine the actual position of the stream course. Mr. Syphard displayed the stream construction plan, which is very close to the actual stream course at the site. He stated that there is about 450' of linear planting space.

Mr. Syphard displayed a tentative plan for the park sidewalk. He stated that the flat area along the stream bed was put in place by the contractor for stabilization of the stream and plant regeneration, so the Tree Committee will not be planting there. He stated that the Tree Committee will plant above the displayed contour line. There is a memorial tree in the park that will remain in place.

Mr. Syphard stated that there may be the opportunity to direct the sidewalk across the stream and do a bit of bridge work if funding is available. He stated that there also have been discussions about bringing the proposed trail design close to the stream. Mr. Syphard stated that the planting plan will at least address the park side of the stream.

Mr. Syphard stated that his intent today is to get ideas about tree types from the members. Mr. Syphard stated that, if the members come to agreement on a plan in the next two or three months, planting may begin in the spring since forest conservation funds will cover the cost of the planting. Mr. Merkel suggested red maples and pin oaks and advised against planting ash trees due to the emerald ash borer. Mr. Lopez suggested chestnut trees. Mr. Syphard stated that the members should consider if they would like to pursue a particular look, native trees, trees of a particular size or particular groupings of trees. He stated that river birch trees would do very well.

Mr. Syphard stated that the plantings should remain somewhat linear and more of an amenity to shade the sidewalk rather than spreading out into the open area. Mr. Lopez stated that some shade-tolerant small trees and/shrubs could be planted as well. Mr. Syphard stated that understory plantings have been discussed, but there should be a balance between aesthetics and maintenance. He advised that understory plantings will involve more maintenance.

Mr. Syphard stated that the parking lot on George Street will not be changing significantly, and the Tree Committee could consider some understory planting and perhaps highlighting that area with a plum tree since it is the entrance to the park. He stated that the Town is working on new signs, and a sign placed there and landscaping around it could be part of the project. Mr. Simini inquired about the Red Buds. Mr. Syphard stated that the Red Buds were doing well there as he recalls. He stated that he will speak with Public Works to determine if it has any plans for the location.

Mr. Syphard stated that he will have more concrete information about the stream bed and the sidewalk plans for the February meeting.

#### 2013 Tree Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that a number of projects have been added to the 2013 Tree Plan. He stated that he has not reviewed the suggested Boulton Street plantings yet. Mr. Lopez stated that one of the trees on Boulton Street has been removed and another is a stump. Mr. Syphard stated that he believes those trees were Armstrong Freeman Maples. He stated that the plan should include replacing any of the trees that have died along Boulton Street.

Mr. Syphard stated that six trees from last year's planting were lost on South Main Street. He stated that they will be replanted. Mr. Syphard stated that there are a couple of dead trees and one or two missing trees. He stated that he will work with the contractor to have those trees replaced. Mr. Syphard stated that last year's trees look good from a mulching standpoint, but he will have the contractor dress the rest of the trees and clean up that corridor.

Mr. Syphard stated that he will have a contractor address the bases of the elms at Rockfield Manor. Mr. Lopez stated that the elms at Rockfield may need fertilizing because their growth rate is very slow. He suggested placing compost at the base of the trees to provide nutrients before mulching them and also raising the crowns up a bit higher. Mr. Syphard stated that he could spec it out that way to the contractor. He stated that if he would hire a contractor such as Pinehurst, he would want them to establish a ring, remove the grass and then mulch.

Mr. Merkel stated that the planting strip on Atwood Road south of Thomas Street is only 3', which is too small for planting trees. Mr. Syphard stated that Atwood Road should be a focus for enhancing access to the Thomas Street walkway because that is where the lighted intersection is located on Baltimore Pike. Mr. Merkel stated that there is no room at all for planting trees on Atwood Road from Baltimore Pike up to Thomas Street. Mr. Syphard stated that Baltimore Pike will not work, but the area around and north off Thomas Street should provide a nice planting plan.

Mr. Syphard asked the members to let him know if they would like to add any projects to the 2013 Planting Plan. He will generate a draft of the plan for the February meeting. Mr. Syphard stated that Plumtree Park could become a fall project rather than a spring project, but South Main Street and Fulford Avenue should be spring projects.

#### Other

Mr. Merkel inquired about the trees removed from the right-of-way on Route 22. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could consider planting in that corridor next year.

Mr. Lopez inquired about the trees planted two or three years ago on Pennsylvania Avenue between Main Street and Bond Street. Mr. Syphard stated that those trees are doing very well.

Mr. Lopez inquired about the trees removed from the median on Route 24. Mr. Syphard stated that a number of trees were removed when the roads were widened for the new hospital access. He stated that he does not know of any current plans to replace those trees.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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**February 13, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Simini, Chair  
Rowan Glidden, Vice Chair  
Conrad Gagnon  
Marion McCarron  
Frank Lopez

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Susan Burdette, Town Commissioner  
Kevin Small, Director of Planning  
Wayne Merkel, DNR  
Catherine Frances Butrim, Recording Secretary

#### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 9, 2013 meeting were approved.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Simini moved to elect Mr. Glidden Chair of the Tree Committee for 2013.

The motion carried.

Ms. McCarron moved to elect Mr. Simini Vice Chair of the Tree Committee for 2013.

The motion carried.

Fulford Avenue Right-of-Way Planting Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that the members should have received a draft of the RFP for the Fulford Avenue/Route 22 Tree Planting Project. He called for any comments or corrections.

Ms. McCarron stated that Page 1 of the RPF calls for six (6) Ginkgo and six (6) Crape Myrte, but the map illustrates seven (7) Ginkgo and five (5) Crape Myrtle.

Ms. McCarron inquired about the deadline date of Friday, March 22, 2013. Mr. Syphard stated that he did not plan to hold a Tree Committee meeting in March. He stated that he planned to hold a Tree Committee meeting in April. Mr. Syphard stated that he could have all the proposals in by March 29; or he could give them an extra week for submission, and the Tree Committee could choose a contractor at its meeting on April 10. The contractor award could then go before the Town Commissioners for approval on April 15. Mr. Syphard stated that it is possible that the Commissioners may want to discuss the contractor award before the meeting, which could push approval to their Board meeting in May. He stated that the cost could be low enough that the Town Commissioners may not be required to approve the award. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could opt to meet in late March to choose a contractor. The members agreed to meet on Wednesday, March 20 at 4:30 p.m. Mr. Syphard stated that he will change the proposal submission deadline to Friday, March 15, 2013.

Mr. Glidden inquired if the members should be present to stake tree locations as indicated in Section 2.1.A of the proposal. Mr. Syphard stated that he will stake the tree locations and that he will let the members know when he will stake if they should choose to accompany him.

Plumtree Park Tree Planting Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that he mapped the top of the new stream bank and that the Tree Committee is working off the corrected plan. He stated that the stream course is close to accurate, except for the parking lot location. He stated that the red line shown on the plan is the top contour line, and that, from there to the stream, it drops and levels out. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee's planting plan would stay to the southwest of the red line. He stated that the circles in the plan are the trees that were left in place.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee has discussed a plum tree planting and that he assumes a sign will be installed at some point. He stated that the area adjacent the parking lot entrance would be a good location to place a tree.

Mr. Syphard stated that he visited the site today and that the area is very wet. He stated that the sidewalk will need to be elevated to some degree when installed. Mr. Syphard advised that any plantings will need to be water tolerant.

Mr. Gagnon inquired about plantings in the area on the other side of the stream. Mr. Syphard stated that the area is almost like surplus land because the only way to gain access is through Western Alley. He stated that the stream cuts the area off from the rest of the park. He advised that the area eventually could be made into a nice picnic area, but it could also be used for additional parking.

Mr. Syphard stated that he likes the idea of planting river birch because of the bark. He stated that the Tree Committee should consider planting more unique and showy trees in this park setting. Mr. Merkel suggested planting pin oaks and red maples.

Mr. Gagnon inquired if willows are planted in the stream. Mr. Syphard stated that whips were bundled horizontally to act as a base. He stated that they should shoot up, and that the Tree Committee will need to consider if it wants that to happen because it eventually could become a maintenance issue.

Mr. Merkel stated that sycamores grow along streams. Mr. Syphard stated that the memorial tree in the park is a sycamore. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could include evergreens and sugar maples in the planting plan. He stated that he does not want to get too formal until it is known exactly how the sidewalk will be installed.

Mr. Lopez stated that winterberry and buttonbush tolerate water year round. He stated that both trees could be either understory or open.

Mr. Syphard stated that whatever is planted should either not drop a lot of fruit or be planted further away from the walking path. He stated that the Tree Committee has 400' to work with and that could easily accommodate 15-20 trees.

Mr. Small inquired about the schedule for planting. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could make the planting plan formal in March and begin planting in late April or early May.

Mr. Merkel inquired if the members should submit a list of 5-6 suggested species. Mr. Syphard stated that the members may email a list of suggested species to him and that he will put together a draft of the planting plan for the members to review at the next meeting.

Mr. Small stated that Harford County Master Gardeners inquired about completing a planting project along the stream. Mr. Small stated that he advised the Gardeners to wait until the Tree Committee planting is complete before initiating any planting projects in Plumtree Park. Mr. Syphard stated that a showy planting at the entrance would be a good project for the Harford County Master Gardeners.

Mr. Gagnon inquired if the Tree Committee will comment on any proposed planting plans by garden clubs. Mr. Syphard stated that the Appearance & Beautification Committee typically reviews all site plans while the Tree Committee performs cursory reviews of site plan street tree plantings.

#### 2013 Tree Plan

Mr. Syphard stated that draft copies of the 2013 Tree Plan were distributed to the members. He called for any corrections or comments.

Ms. McCarron stated that the word "be" should be struck from the final sentence under Review of Accomplishments in 2012 on Page 1.

Ms. McCarron stated that specifics and facts about the trees in the Town should remain in the 2013 Tree Plan as a ready reference. Mr. Syphard stated that he will include the bullet points from the 2012 Tree Plan in the 2013 Tree Plan.

Ms. McCarron stated that partnerships and sustainability should be mentioned in the 2013 Tree Plan. Mr. Syphard stated that partnerships and sustainability were not mentioned in order to avoid redundancy. Ms. McCarron advised that the 2013 Tree Plan could be a new document to some readers. Mr. Syphard stated that he will include mention of partnerships and sustainability in the draft of the 2013 Tree Plan and have the draft ready for the next meeting.

#### Other

Mr. Small stated that the Town is looking for landscape contractors to sponsor the horticultural gardens at Rockfield Manor.

Mr. Simini stated that he attended the Harford County Forestry Board meeting and that he was asked if the Tree Committee would like a 2" caliper redbud tree. Mr. Small inquired if redbuds are planted along South Main Street

because several trees at the Methodist church on South Main Street have been run over. Mr. Small stated that a redbud sapling in the grass garden at Rockfield Manor was used as a rub by a deer and is now in poor condition. Mr. Syphard stated that some of the redbuds planted on Bond Street were rubbed at the nursery.

Mr. Lopez stated that the Forestry Board has 4 species of seedlings that may be used for plantings for events. He stated that the seedlings will be available from the end of March through April. Ms. Burdette stated that the Town could plant the Forestry Board's seedlings in order to earn points for sustainability.

Mr. Lopez stated that the Harford County Master Gardeners will be looking for planting projects to complete in the spring. He advised that they do not provide funding for the projects.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

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March 20, 2013

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was called to order on Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rowan Glidden, Chair  
Michael Simini, Vice Chair  
Marion McCarron  
Frank Lopez

ALSO PRESENT: Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Susan Burdette, Town Commissioner  
Wayne Merkel, DNR  
Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 13, 2013 meeting were approved.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### 2013 Tree Plan

Mr. Syphard reported the additions to the 2013 Tree Plan draft discussed last month have been made and asked for comments. Everyone was in agreement and the plan was approved.

##### Plumtree Park Tree Planting Plan -- Phase 1

Mr. Syphard stated the project will be developed in two phases and the committee is being asked to complete phase one for planting this spring. Mr. Syphard discussed the planting plans and advised this can be modified. Mr. Lopez questioned if the Redbud could take heavy moisture. Mr. Syphard found reviews saying they could and felt the water would drain sufficiently. He chose the Redbud for more color and the committee can address any issues during phase two. Mr. Merkel liked the mixed options and Mr. Glidden agreed it is informal and more naturalistic. Mr. Syphard pointed out phase two could be more formal. Mr. Glidden agreed especially on Thomas Street near the street

scape and inquired about that project. Mr. Syphard advised it is dependent on money and Economic Development will have to look into opportunities.

Mr. Syphard is hoping to go to the park on Friday and finalize the locations for the trees. In order to speed up planting, there is a potential of multiple contracts.

Mr. Glidden inquired if the plan chosen would be added to the 2013 Tree Plan. Mr. Syphard stated it would.

#### Seedling Giveaway at Farmer's Market

Commissioner Burdette and Mr. Lopez of the Department of Natural Resources spoke last meeting about possibly partnering with the Farmer's Market to distribute seedlings. Commissioner Burdette suggested having brochures/pictures available with the type of tree and directions on how to plant. Mr. Lopez reported the seedlings are Redbud, Chinkapin, Plum, and Douglas Fir and will need to be wrapped before handing out. He is currently revising information with pictures and tips for those who take a seedling. Mr. Lopez felt April would be best for planting and will need an amount. Any extras can be returned and new ones procured for a different event.

Mr. Simini suggested having a few Master Gardeners available during the event for questions. He volunteered to coordinate the event with them. Mr. Syphard stated the first Saturday Farmer's Market will be April 13th and he would secure a spot. He will check with the board to determine a proper number of seedlings and contact Mr. Lopez on Friday. Mr. Syphard would like to be able to bag the seedlings. Suggestions were to contact businesses for donation of bags, i.e. the Aegis, the Mill, and ShopRite or checking with Forestry Supply. Commissioner Burdette would like to see the event advertised. Mr. Syphard will place it on the website. It was further suggested to have a graphic on the table of each group participating.

Mr. Syphard reported the Elms for Shamrock Park should be available in two weeks.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Fulford Avenue Bid Proposals

Mr. Syphard informed five bids were received for the project and explained all the requirements. The bids were from Cedar Ridge Landscaping, Pinehurst Landscaping, TDH Landscaping, Ivy Hill Nursery and Bartenfelder Landscaping. Mr. Syphard asked the Committee to develop a point system so that review for each bid would be consistent. After discussion, the following point system was agreed upon with 5 point intervals:

- Plant Material - 25%
- Adherence to Specs - 30%
- Planting Schedule - 25%
- Total Cost - 20%

The bids were opened by Mr. Syphard and distributed to the Committee for review. Each member reviewed each bid and determined points to be awarded.

Mr. Syphard received the percentages for each bid and tallied the results. With three bids receiving the same percentage, the Committee looked at cost in order to differentiate.

Cedar Ridge Landscaping won the bid for the Fulford Avenue project. Mr. Syphard will coordinate the planting with Cedar Ridge.

There will be no meeting in April.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

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July 10, 2013

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rowan Glidden, Chair  
Mike Simini, Vice Chair  
Marion McCarron

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Susan Burdette, Town Commissioner  
Catherine Frances Butrim, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 20, 2013 meeting were approved.

Urban Tree Canopy Discussion and Goals

Mr. Syphard stated that Harford County recently contracted with the University of Vermont's Spatial Laboratory to conduct an Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) assessment that included the Town. He stated that he has been using the data to come up with calculations specific to the Town. Most of the information was based on aerial photography and satellite imagery, and the images were taken when trees are in full bloom. Mr. Syphard has been limited to working with the database associated with parcel information but he's suspect of the results. He stated that canopy coverage that extends over the road decreases the amount of roadway; so the numbers associated with parcel information are not necessarily correct. Mr. Syphard stated that the purpose of the study is percentage of tree canopy for a given area. Mr. Syphard stated that the yellow box on the map represents the County's calculations, and the Town's calculations are on the side. He stated that there appears to be about 44 percent canopy coverage within the Town based on parcel data, which if accurate is good and comparable to some of the higher cities in Maryland. Mr. Syphard stated that a benchmark of 40 percent has been created over the last couple of years for Maryland. He stated that the Tree Committee should consider how to stay above that percentage mark. The Town has had a no net loss policy regarding street trees, and the Town typically plants more street trees than it loses each year. He stated that the Town would like to have a better accountability system in place.

Mr. Syphard stated that most of what is shown on the map is not inclusive of street trees because the percentages are calculated off of another map, which is parcel-by-parcel mapping and the percentage of tree canopy for each individual parcel excluding roadways. Mr. Syphard stated that he has not yet spoken to anyone to learn if street trees and the canopy associated with them were pulled into adjoining parcels in creating the calculations. He stated that he does not believe this was done. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town has control over public parcels, but the private parcels are more of an issue. The Town has a better handle on commercial private parcels due to forest conservation, but parcels of residential properties pose an accountability issue because there is potential to lose canopy coverage over time without any means of replacing it. Mr. Syphard stated that he would like the Tree Committee to focus on this issue.



Mr. Syphard stated parks and floodplain areas are represented in purple on the map. Many of the areas with the best canopy coverage include parks and floodplain areas, which typically are areas of preservation. Mr. Syphard stated that he will generate some numbers for these specific areas for the next meeting.

Mr. Syphard displayed a map that attempted to prioritize an increase in canopy coverage. He stated that some of the map is not applicable because the areas are associated with open areas in parks and ball fields. There are some areas associated with floodplains and with existing forest corridors where there is the opportunity for additional planting. Mr. Syphard stated that one particular area that poses an opportunity is the St. Matthew's Church property, which has been approved for some development and will likely be approved for additional development in the future. A forest conservation plan for the property is in review.

Mr. Syphard stated that he would like the Tree Committee to establish a canopy coverage benchmark and then determine how to make improvements and set a plan of action. He stated that, over the course of the next few meetings, the Tree Committee should use the study's findings to formulate benchmarks and standards to follow moving into the future. The Town likely will not have the ability to regenerate canopy coverage calculations and may not be able to revisit this topic for another decade; therefore, it will be better to develop a direction that will at least maintain the current numbers.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Public Works Department will be initiating fees associated with impervious surface area. He stated that his idea is to offer a way for residents to offset the tax by planting trees. This will not necessarily decrease impervious area, but trees planted in parking lots could absorb water and counteract the impervious area. Mr. Syphard stated that this credit could be one way to create incentive for residential property owners to plant trees when they expand impervious area. He stated that the Tree Committee may wish to create guidelines for this incentive.

Mr. Syphard stated that a tree giveaway could be offered each year at the Bel Air Farmers Market, although it may be difficult to quantify because not all Farmers Market customers live in the Town.

Mr. Glidden inquired if the methodology for the study was shared with the Town. Mr. Syphard stated that the methodology was not shared because it was shown to the Town in a webinar format. Mr. Glidden stated that he has serious doubts that the existing trees in the parking lot at the Upper Chesapeake site match the numbers generated by the study. Mr. Syphard stated that this is one reason why he wants to check with the County. He stated that the database associated with this information breaks down on a parcel-by-parcel basis the total area and the total square-footage of each area. The area totals typically do not match the size of the subject lot and that is why he considers the numbers suspect. Mr. Syphard stated that another issue is that each tree is covering an impervious area. Mr. Glidden stated his concern that green color depicted on the photo imagery does not necessarily translate to trees. He stated that the study could be confusing shrubs and hedges with trees. Mr. Syphard stated that grass and shrubs vs. tree canopy are in their same calculation. He stated that the lighter green or yellow on the map represents grass and shrubs. Mr. Glidden expressed the concern that the numbers are inaccurate because most of the hospital lot contains hedges, not trees. Mr. Syphard stated that he believes the University of Vermont was sent a cadastral layer, and the University of Vermont interpreted its own satellite imagery and compared it to the cadastral layer. Mr. Glidden stated that if the University used infrared photogrammetry, it should have been able to distinguish between hedges and trees. Mr. Syphard stated that he believes that is what the University has done. Mr. Syphard stated that he believes approximately half of the Town's canopy cover is in areas that the Town cannot protect. He stated he will have the County verify the numbers he has calculated before the next meeting.

Ms. Burdette inquired if the study would be useful as a reference for the Planning Commission to determine how much a proposed development would disturb the tree canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that this is where forest

conservation comes in and, if a development goes beyond a certain point in disturbing and removing trees, there is a penalty. Ms. Burdette inquired if this is based on the number of trees or the tree canopy. Mr. Glidden stated that it is based on the amount of forest, which does not necessarily equate to canopy cover. Mr. Syphard stated that the definition of forest is specific to the number of trees per acre. Mr. Syphard stated that, as an example, the bulk of the trees on the St. Matthew's property are succeeding Callery pear trees, probably the worst trees to have on any site. He would like to see those trees removed and have good seedling stock planted—such as oak, maple and birch—that will produce good canopy.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could decide to better quantify street tree removals and plantings, and it may decide to become more proactive about replacing trees that have been removed. He stated that, when the Town begins to work on Thomas Street, Atwood Road landscaping could be done at the same time as a test case for plantings in residential areas. Mr. Glidden stated that he would like to see how the Town compares to the other areas studied in Maryland as a percentage because that could inspire the Town to choose a higher benchmark that is still reasonable. Mr. Syphard stated that Mr. Lopez may be able to access the number of studies that have been completed in the state. Mr. Syphard stated that Harford County, including the municipalities, has 47.5 percent tree canopy. He stated that he does not believe the study cut out each of the municipalities. Mr. Glidden stated that he would be interested to learn if the County has compared the numbers in the three municipalities to the rest of Harford County. Mr. Glidden stated that he hopes that Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) was excluded; he expressed the concern that APG may have been included because it is a large forest area. Mr. Syphard stated that County maps typically show APG as a different area. Mr. Glidden Mr. Syphard stated that he will look at the Harford County boundaries examined in the study. Mr. Syphard stated that it is fine if the Tree Committee would like to set a higher benchmark, but he advised that the priority areas identified in the study are not practical areas. He stated that the Tree Committee would have to identify priority areas that the Town has control over if a higher benchmark is considered. Ms. Burdette stated that a benchmark for urban tree canopy could be an action item in the Town's Sustainability Plan. Mr. Syphard confirmed that an urban tree canopy goal is an action item in the Plan. Mr. Glidden stated that the Tree Committee could determine a benchmark but still aim for a higher number.

Ms. Burdette suggested having a raffle or lottery for citizens to win a river birch planted by the Tree Committee. Ms. Burdette stated that the federal government is greatly interested in the partnerships of applicants for grant funding. She stated that it would be a positive for the Tree Committee to partner with the Master Gardeners and other similar organizations, and the percentage of Town tree canopy is a good statistic for grant applications.

Mr. Syphard stated that he will speak to Jennifer Wilson at Harford County regarding the study methods and means to quantify the results. He stated that the members should call him with any questions or comments before the next meeting in September.

Ms. McCarron inquired if the dead trees on Route 924 will be replaced. Mr. Syphard stated that all trees along the right-of-way have been replaced. Mr. Syphard stated that there are several dead trees adjacent Bel Air United Methodist Church, which were previously topped by the church; those trees will not be replaced by the Town. He stated that most of the trees there have done well. Mr. Syphard stated that the trees at Plumtree are doing great, and the elms at Shamrock look fantastic. He stated that Mr. Gagnon planted a Valley Forge American elm tree at Rockfield Manor where an elm was lost years ago.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

September 11, 2013

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was held on Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rowan Glidden, Chair  
Mike Simini, Vice Chair  
Marion McCarron  
Frank Lopez

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Wayne Merkel, DNR  
Catherine Frances Butrim, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 10, 2013 meeting were approved.

Urban Tree Canopy Discussion and Goals

Mr. Syphard stated that following the Tree Committee's discussion concerning the initial findings presented for the Town's urban tree canopy (UTC), additional information was collected to determine the Town's existing UTC. Based on the new findings and verification from Harford County's geographic information department, UTC data has been provided for the Tree Committee's review. Mr. Syphard stated that the correct figure for UTC in the Town of Bel Air is 36.7%. Of that percentage, 86.1% of the UTC is on parceled land (some of which is privately owned), 13.9% of the UTC is in the right-of-way and 30.5% of the right-of-way is under canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that protected canopy is 36% of the total UTC. Of that percentage, 7.3% is in parks, 4.5% is in forest conservation areas (excluding floodplain), and 10.3% is in 100-year and 500-year floodplain.

Mr. Syphard stated that the map of priority areas displayed at this evening's meeting suggests areas where additional trees cover may be planted. He stated that many areas on this map are ball fields and areas in parks that are not conducive to additional tree plantings. Mr. Syphard stated that 66% of the lot area in parks in the Town have canopy coverage. He advised that there is not a significant amount of park area to add tree canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that 92.3% of forest conservation area outside designated floodplains have canopy coverage. Floodplains have 70% canopy coverage, which is not higher because some of the Plumtree floodplain runs through developed areas. He advised that there is not likely to be significant areas of floodplain that can take on additional canopy coverage. Mr. Syphard stated that 30.5% of the right-of-way has canopy coverage, which may be increased with the addition of street trees. Mr. Syphard stated that the only significant privately owned area in the Town to increase canopy coverage is on the St. Matthew Lutheran Church property. He stated that most of this property will be included in the forest conservation area. Much of the forest conservation area currently has Callery Pear trees. The State requires protection of the Gentian flower, a rare species, currently growing on the property. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town would like to see as many of the Callery Pear trees removed as possible along with plantings of maple, oak and beech trees to provide future canopy coverage. He advised that there also are 3-4 utility easements running through the property.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should set a sustainable goal for UTC coverage for the Town and a strategic plan behind that goal. Mr. Syphard stated that the State has established a goal of 40% for UTC. He stated that most of the municipalities with UTC assessments have a canopy coverage percentage in the teens to low 30s range. Mr. Glidden stated that it would be helpful to translate the percentages stated into acreage because that relates back to the original computation of UTC.

Mr. Lopez stated that the Tree Committee should plant trees in certain parts of the Town, such as certain areas on Route 1, to enhance their visual appeal, and he further stated that it might be best to enhance the areas that will be most traveled by pedestrians and cyclists to navigate the major routes. Mr. Syphard advised that the plantings on Route 1 would have to be on private properties, which often change hands and get redeveloped. Mr. Syphard stated that there will not be opportunities for large planting projects in the near future. He suggested that street tree plantings should be the top priority for the Tree Committee. Mr. Lopez suggested tree plantings on Kelly Avenue, where there are wide tree lawns, and on the left side of Atwood Road.

Mr. Syphard advised that it may be years before another UTC assessment is completed in the Town, so it may be quite some time before the goals set by the Tree Committee can be quantified.

Mr. Lopez inquired about the advantages of the annexation of the St. Matthew's Church property. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town's regulations regarding sensitive areas are not as restrictive as Harford County's regulations. Mr. Glidden stated that the State requires a 25' buffer around wetlands and that Harford County requires an additional 50' buffer around wetlands for a total of 75' buffer around wetlands. Mr. Glidden stated that the County requires a 50' buffer around the 100-year floodplain, which is variable depending on the topography. He stated that the County has a Natural Resource District, which requires the greater of 75' or 150' buffer around the stream depending on whether the property is above or below 400-acre drainage area. Mr. Syphard stated that the St. Matthew's Church property would have been practically undevelopable with Harford County regulations in place.

Mr. Syphard suggested that any future "Rain Tax" for residential lots could possibly be offset with tree plantings. Mr. Glidden advised that the intent of the "Rain Tax" is to use the funds either to create quantifiable decreases in impervious surfaces or to create treatments of impervious surfaces that will lower the maximum daily load of nutrients deposited in the Chesapeake Bay. He advised that the TMDL value of the trees planted to offset the "Rain Tax" would need to be quantified. Mr. Syphard stated that the benefit of planting trees to offset the tax would be long-term. Mr. Lopez suggested that 1-2 tree plantings could be combined with a rain garden, and stated that the trees would have to be planted right by a driveway in order to capture the runoff from the driveway. Mr. Glidden stated that a tree planted on a lawn still reduces runoff significantly.

Mr. Merkel stated that House Bill 706, which requires no net tree loss, was passed this year. He inquired if the Town can maintain 36.7% UTC. Mr. Syphard stated that trees in subdivisions like Homestead and Bradford Village have reached the age at which they are beginning to fall apart, and there is a question of whether the trees that need to be removed can be replaced in those specific locations. He stated that he does

see the Town losing a significant number of street trees and that those lost will be mostly age-related, large canopy trees that will decrease UTC in the Town. Mr. Syphard stated that the best way to address this is to maintain a no net loss policy regarding street trees, continue programs for free trees, and encourage people to plant trees on private property.

Mr. Lopez inquired if there is any other land in Bel Air that has subdivision potential. Mr. Syphard stated that the property off of Williams and Thomas Streets will likely become a townhouse development and that the Hooper property off of Harford Sanitation will hopefully be sold and redeveloped with significantly more tree canopy than is currently present. Mr. Syphard stated that less than 10 acres of the St. Matthew's Church property is realistically developable, but 40+ acres of the floodplain, wetland and forest conservation areas can be protected canopy coverage.

Mr. Lopez stated that the Paca House property would be a great property for a park and tree plantings and a possible connection to Route 543 and Prospect Mill. Mr. Syphard stated that the County did receive a subdivision plan for that property several years ago, which has since expired. He stated that the Town approached the property owners' representative to discuss the potential for the property should they wish to annex into the Town.

Mr. Glidden suggested that trees could be planted around and between the ball fields to create canopy coverage and shade for spectators.

In working with the State's Forest Conservation Law, Mr. Lopez stated that he would like to pursue an idea of creating a listing of property owners who would like to have trees planted and then provide that list of contacts and a list of contractors, with government approval, to developers who need a location to plant. He stated that this would allow for a free market means for property owners to receive a buffer on their land with maintenance, for contractors to be hired by developers and for developers to receive their money back faster if the trees are maintained as they should be. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town could do something similar. We could put the word out through the *Bel Air Bond* and possibly through tax bills informing property owners to contact the Town if they would like to have a tree planted within the right-of-way in front of their house. That way the Committee would be preparing planting plans based on want rather than need and would not have to eliminate planned planting sites due to citizen complaints.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should begin to formulate a goal and a strategic plan to reach and maintain the goal for the October meeting.

#### Majors Oak Maintenance

Mr. Syphard stated that A & A Tree Experts, Inc. performed elevation, dead wooding and lightning protection on the Majors Oak on August 27. He stated that Tom Mayer prepared an undated insurance assessment on the Majors Oak, and that Mr. Mayer and Matt Anacker, president of A & A Tree Experts, nominated the Town for an International Society of Arboriculture Gold Leaf Award for the Town's continued preservation efforts on the Majors Oak. He stated that the Town will be notified about the award results in October.

Other

Mr. Lopez inquired about the banks of the creek in Plumtree Park. Mr. Syphard stated that whips were placed in the areas created for storage water, and that material will come up over time. He stated that the Town is thinking of planting winterberry, holly and other maintenance-free materials on the berms on the residential side of the stream. Mr. Syphard stated that students will do the plantings, but the Town is looking for a source for purchase of the plants. Mr. Lopez suggested Pinelands Nursery in New Jersey and New Moon Nursery in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, which has containerized shrubs and trees at a relatively inexpensive price.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

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**October 9, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Tree Committee was held on Wednesday, October 9, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. at the Department of Planning, 705 E. Churchville Road, Bel Air, Maryland.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Simini, Vice Chair  
Marion McCarron  
Frank Lopez  
Conrad Gagnon

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Syphard, Senior Planner  
Susan Burdette, Town Commissioner  
Wayne Merkel, DNR  
Catherine Frances Butrim, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 11, 2013 meeting were approved.

Urban Tree Canopy Discussion and Goals

Mr. Syphard stated that Mr. Glidden recommended quantifying the percentages for the UTC in order to make it more usable. He stated that the Town's 3.03 sq. mi. equates to approximately 84.5 million sq. ft. The roadway area equates to 14 million sq. ft., 4 million sq. ft. of which is canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should now determine if the goal should be to maintain 36% UTC or aim for a higher or lower number. He stated that the best area to gain canopy coverage is in the un-forested floodplain area of St Matthew Lutheran Church. Mr. Syphard stated that it will take 840,000 sq. ft., or 19 acres, of canopy coverage to increase the Town's UTC by 1%, and the Town cannot get 19 acres of canopy coverage in the floodplain of St Matthew Lutheran Church. He stated that he does not know if it is realistic for the Tree Committee to determine that it will increase UTC in the Town. Mr. Syphard stated that one issue is having the square footage to increase canopy coverage, which would need to be in areas such as floodplains; and the other issue is having the lineal area to produce enough canopy coverage. He stated that, if the Town started with a red

maple with a canopy of 25 sq. ft., it would take 20 years to get to 2,500 sq. ft. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should determine this evening if it wants to maintain the 36% UTC or aim for a higher or lower number and develop a strategy behind that determination.

Mr. Gagnon stated that there would be 1% increase in UTC in twenty years if 330 trees were planted now. Mr. Syphard stated that the issue is that the Town will continue to lose mature trees and replant with smaller stock that often will not grow as large as the trees removed over the course of that 20-year period. Mr. Gagnon stated that the grounds supervisor at John Carroll School told him that the school plants at least three trees for every tree that is removed. Mr. Gagnon inquired how plantings at the Upper Chesapeake campus affect the UTC. Mr. Syphard stated that much tree canopy was lost at the Upper Chesapeake campus with the addition of parking lots and that a UTC assessment from 10 years ago would have been at approximately 40%. He stated that the Town no longer has large parcels of land to be developed that would result in the loss of a large percentage of canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that maintaining 36% UTC is probably realistic because there will not be large development projects that will remove 14-16 acres of canopy.

Ms. McCarron stated that she noticed some reforestation at Kelly Fields. Mr. Gagnon stated that this was a Harford County contract, in which the contractor dug the holes and supplied the materials and students planted 125 trees along the streams. He stated that this planting in the Town is one of seven Harford County plantings happening throughout the County.

Mr. Simini inquired about the Tree Inventory and about locations where trees are missing and can be replaced. Mr. Syphard stated that the issue is that, in many locations where trees are being removed, DPW does not want trees to be planted because many of those planting strips are 2'-3'. He stated that DPW policy is not to plant in strips smaller than 4'. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should investigate planting in residential areas where there are wider planting strips and that there are planting locations in Howard Park and Homestead. He stated that it may be easier to approach planting in those residential areas through sewer or tax bills by including a card asking residents to contact the Town if they would like to have a tree planted on their properties. Mr. Lopez stated that this is an effective approach because the neighboring property owners will see the healthy trees being planted and not be reminded of the dead trees being removed. Mr. Syphard stated that there are not many commercial opportunities for planting and the Tree Committee should be more proactive with residential plantings.

Mr. Syphard inquired if the members feel that maintaining 36% UTC is realistic. He stated that he does not think it is realistic to increase that number because the Town is losing 15-20 significant trees in the right-of-way each year. Mr. Gagnon stated that the Town would need to plant approximately 60 trees each year in order to maintain 36% UTC if it is losing 15-20 trees each year. Mr. Syphard stated that his thought is that the Tree Committee could implement a lower number while becoming proactive about retention and additional plantings. He stated that he can create a list annually of right-of-way trees that will be removed and estimate their canopy, so the Tree Committee can plan to replace the number of trees that will be removed. Mr. Syphard stated that there also will be some development projects in the Town that usually result in the

addition of some street trees. Ms. McCarron inquired if 33% UTC is realistic. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee could set a minimum percentage that it will not go below rather than stating that it will maintain 36% UTC, but he is more concerned about the strategy for maintaining UTC. Mr. Merkel inquired if a minimum of 35% UTC is too high. Mr. Syphard stated that he will need to look at the number of trees and canopy lost, particularly in Homestead and Bradford Village, over the last 4-5 years. Mr. Merkel stated that plantings will need to occur on private properties in order to increase canopy. Mr. Syphard stated that the problem is that easements are needed in order to protect those trees on private properties, and realistically, there are not many private areas that will become forested over time. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town should continue the program to give away trees, but add a list to quantify how many seedlings Town residents take, at the Farmers Market in order get more trees on private properties in the Town. Mr. Lopez stated that BGE may be continuing a program next year to give away two trees to property owners. He stated that property owners need to send a request to BGE and that there was a choice of five species. Mr. Syphard stated that the Marketplace on Main event will become a monthly themed event on Sundays, which will begin in April. He stated that the Town will be getting in touch with the Master Gardeners for the event and that flowers and cuttings will be available, so this event would be ideal for a tree giveaway.

Mr. Syphard stated that it is realistic to set a goal of 35% UTC while factoring in losses and proactively counteracting those losses with new trees. He stated that the Town will not have any means to quantify UTC again until another study is completed. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee may revisit that number in 3-5 years.

Mr. Gagnon stated that John Carroll School has obtained a grant to put an acre of the area between the ponds in reforestation. He stated that the school wants to make the area a contemplative place for artists and an outdoor classroom. Mr. Gagnon stated that the slope closest to the lower pond will be reforested, and the rest will be meadow.

Mr. Lopez inquired about the size of the right-of-way in parts of Homestead. Mr. Syphard stated that it is probably all 50' right-of-ways. He stated that, in most cases, it is back edge of sidewalk to back edge of sidewalk and whatever is left is between the curb and sidewalk. Mr. Syphard stated that, in many cases, the problem is that only 6' is left, so 3' is put on the side. He stated that at Brookhill only 6' was left, so the Town pushed the sidewalk right against the curb and planted trees 3' back, which left a sizeable lawn to grow into for an oak rather than a serviceberry. Mr. Syphard stated that this approach works if the area is small and speeds are slower. Mr. Lopez inquired if the sidewalks could be reconfigured on the side streets where the oaks drop out. Mr. Syphard stated that the trees drop out randomly while the sidewalk panels are fixed in sections. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee should concentrate on areas where there are wide strips for plantings.

Mr. Syphard stated that the Town also could encourage more forest conservation by accepting less fee-in-lieu and having more plantings done and also strengthen the floodplain ordinance, if possible, to make



sure there is no development in floodplains. He stated that the Town also could strengthen its landscape requirements for developments.

Mr. Syphard stated that a mailing could be included in the Town's tax bill asking residents who want a tree on their properties to contact the Town. Mr. Merkel inquired what size tree could be provided. Mr. Syphard stated that the trees would be seedlings. Mr. Lopez stated that some of the trees provided by BGE might be larger. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town could help BGE promote that program. Mr. Lopez inquired stated that the Forest Service giveaway could include larger-growing trees into the seedling mix. Mr. Lopez inquired if people were asking for larger trees at the Farmers Market. Mr. Simini stated that many people were concerned about the trees growing too large. Mr. Syphard stated that the Tree Committee can concentrate on planting large trees wherever it is appropriate. Mr. Lopez stated that they can inquire at the giveaways about the situation on particular properties and offer larger-growing trees to properties where they would be appropriate. He stated that he can investigate if BGE will be offering larger-growing trees next year. Mr. Syphard stated that he can investigate if the Town would be interested in offering a 1-inch caliper tree. Mr. Lopez stated that the State may offer programs next year for \$25 off trees at participating nurseries. Mr. Syphard stated that the Town could include a page to direct residents to these programs on its new website. He stated that the Tree Committee could consider having a discussion with Danny about a cooperative agreement with BGE.

Mr. Lopez stated that the large silver maple in front of the old *Aegis* building should be removed. He stated that 2-3 trees at the old Freddie's building were removed. Mr. Syphard stated that he has spoken to DPW about pulling the stump on that property and then he will have that maple and the serviceberry replaced. Mr. Lopez stated that the Town should approach the new owners of that property and ask that they make sure those trees are not removed.

Mr. Merkel inquired if the expansion of I-95 will extend to Bel Air. Mr. Syphard stated that he does not believe that expansion of I-95 will extend to Bel Air. Mr. Merkel stated that MDTA is not doing any reforestation, but it is paying a fee-in-lieu to DNR. He stated that House Bill 706 allowed for a mitigation plan that will permit for plantings of acres or individual trees on private land as well as public land. Mr. Syphard inquired if the Town could obtain funds from DNR to plant on private property. Mr. Merkel stated that the parameters have not yet been set, but the law allows for plantings to occur on private land.

Mr. Lopez stated that the Town could work with Rockfield Park and John Carroll to create areas and walkways with trees behind bleachers and between the ball fields.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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