

DRAFT MINUTES
Tree Conservation Commission Business Meeting
Remote via Zoom
Tuesday, January 18, 2021, 4:45 pm

Zoom Meeting link for joining by computer:

<https://zoom.us/j/97544400144#success>

Meeting ID: 975 4440 0144

Dial-In: 301-715-8592, access code: 975444400144#

Commissioners present: Susanne Blam, Lawrence Richardson, Chet Tisdale, Jack Cebe

Staff present: Kathy Evans, TCC staff.

1. **Minutes.** December 15 Business Meeting minutes approved by all present.
2. **Meetings.** Discussed whether to change Business Meeting time because of frequent conflicts for some members. All present are available to continue meeting at 4:45pm on Tuesdays prior to the (3rd Wednesday of the month) appeal hearings. Also available for Mondays at 5pm; will poll other Commissioners to determine if meeting time should be changed.
3. **Hearing Schedule.** Confirm expected attendance for hearings: January 20 (Cebe, Tisdale, Ricardson, Blam) and January 27 (Cebe, Tisdale, Richardson).
4. **Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve.** Discussed possible programming for restoration of Lake Charlotte land including the possibility of employing youth to assist with early phases of cleanup rather than relying entirely upon volunteer work and professional consultants. Brainstorm includes – utilizing gift cards, YMCA, Rec Centers, Greening Youth, TreeKeepers, etc. Lake Charlotte is the first acquisition of forested land utilizing Tree Trust Funds. Restoration work planned for coming year.
5. **Arbor Day.** February 19, 2021. City Council Proclamation (virtual meeting, Feb 5 – update: Proclamation will be in writing only during remote meetings due to pandemic precautions). Reminder: Tree Plantings with Trees Atlanta. “A Blooming Forest” Tree Tribute to John Lewis, plantings along the John Lewis Freedom Parkway. Hundreds of blooming trees and plants will line the corridor which will bloom from February (John Lewis's birthday month and Georgia Arbor Day month) and continue through the spring. First phase is 3-day planting in John Lewis Plaza (where Freedom Parkway meet Ponce de Leon) *Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Feb. 19, 20, and 21.*
6. **Tree Ordinance.** Updates on status of draft tree protection ordinance. Today, 1/19/21, a Draft was introduced at City Council, along with a companion ordinance that would amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Administrative approval of setback variances up to 80 percent for the purpose of saving trees.

Discussion and concerns expressed regarding the Draft:

- “Preservation Standards” allow a percentage of Priority Trees to be removed (percent differs depending on lot size).
- No appeal rights (other than for adjacent neighbors) for all sites where the “Preservation Standard” is met.
- No setback protections.
- No preservation for multi-family or any non-SF areas.
- Per Chet, Draft rejects much more reasonable approaches offered. Conscientious Homebuilders are supportive of a different more protective approach and many provisions seem directed to appeal to the least conscientious builders. Has been explained as offering a “safe harbor” for builders with no possibility of appeal.
- Not sure of rationale.
- Municipal election year.
- Citizens Group still working with informing City Council Members and organizing trips to field to discuss preservation strategies. Request that Members connect the group with Council Members who will be interested in learning more about a different approach to tree preservation.

7. **Old Business.** Attorneys will provide update on pending legal action at February Business meeting in Executive Session.

8. **New Business.**