

CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK
TREE ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
OF
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021, 4:00 pm

ATTENDING

The Advisory Board:

Marlene Wertheim, City Council Appointee

Eveline Feldmann, City Council Appointee

Henry May, City Council Appointee

Marlon Molina, Deputy Commissioner City of Mount Vernon Planning Department

Vincent DeVito, City Tree Surgeon, Appointed by Commissioner of DPW

Other participants were:

Councilwoman Janice Duarte

Commissioner Damani Bush, DPW

Cranson Johnson, Deputy Assessor

Ms. Deborah Burell-Butler, Executive Director Youth Bureau

Lysanne Ms. Szabo from Buildings

Ms. Jennifer Mastrogiorgio, DPW

Ms. Taneisa Walters, Deputy City Clerk

Ms. Janee Bedford, Assistant Corporation Counsel

Mr. Steve Lawrence, City of Mount Vernon Grants Administrator

Facilitator/Office support:

Elias Gootzeit, Legislative Assistant to the Mount Vernon City Council

AGENDA

Applicability of Open Meetings Law

Adoption of Rules and Procedures of the Mount Vernon Tree Advisory Board

Election of Officers

Discussion of Environmental Justice Grant from the Arbor Day Foundation

SUMMARY

The Meeting began at 4pm on September 16th at 4pm. All members of the Advisory Board were present via Zoom. Mr. May appeared by phone after the votes were taken as described below. A brief discussion of Public Meetings Law under NYS Public Officers Law, Article 7, Section 102 from Mr. Gootzeit and Ms. Bedford confirming that MV Tree Advisory Board is a public body within the meaning of the law and therefore required to meet the requirements of giving notices of the meetings to the public, permitting the public to attend meetings and to make recordings or minutes available in a manner that meets the standards of current COVID restriction.

The members established that future meetings would be scheduled for the FIRST and THIRD THURSDAYS of each month, at 4.PM.

The Rules of Procedure that were proposed by Marlene Wertheim and Eveline Feldmann were discussed at passed by Ms. Wertheim, Ms. Feldman, Mr. DeVito and Mr. Molino.

An election for the officers-Chair and Vice Chair, was performed. Ms. Wertheim nominated Ms. Feldmann for Chair. Mr. DeVito seconded. Mr. DeVito, Ms. Wertheim, Ms. Feldmann and Mr. Molina voted yes.

Ms. Wertheim got nominated for Vice-Chair and received 4 yes votes as well.

Ms. Feldmann inquired if those present have received the materials contributed by MVCitizenTree with resource links and background information very relevant to the preparation and submission of the Environmental Justice Grant that is due September 30th to the Arbor Day Foundation. There seemed to be little familiarity with this submission. She also added that the TAB needs to participate in the planning and implementation of this grant. CitizenTree and FCWC(Federated Conservationists of Westchester County) offered their partnership as well.

It was emphasized that all TAB members need to get city-compatible e-mail addresses.

Mr. Molina mentioned use of the Own Your Zone program. In determining the best fit for Executive Agency within the City Government, Mr. Molina identified Department Mission, Capacity to Implement the Program and the availability of Community Capital. Mr. Molina brought representatives of other City Agencies assisting him in the plan for fulfilling the grant. Grant availability is \$50,000 in the first year and \$50,000 in the second year. Mr. Molina noted half of the grant each year (\$25,000) may be used to provide Human Capital Organizing and the other half must be used to impact on the tree inventory within the City's least served neighborhoods from the perspective of available tree canopy. Of importance in this, regard, consideration is being given to the logistics of how the trees will get planted using a youth community involvement vehicle.

Mr. Molina sees the Mount Vernon Youth Bureau and the Department of Public Works will design and manage the grant in appropriate "Hot Zones" throughout the City. The City's chief grants administrator Steve Lawrence, reviewed the Arbor Day Foundation requirements. He noted that the foundation has funded non-profits and municipalities. He recommended that the City of Mount Vernon should be the applicant. He hasn't yet determined whether the grant pays upfront or is re-imbursable-requiring that the applicant spend the money first, and then provide receipts for reimbursements. The Mount Vernon Youth Bureau, as applicant with DPW, will be responsible for the fund, and has a track record of success with other grants. Additional concerns that have not yet been developed are whether there is a required match from the applicant and whether and what "in-kind" elements can be listed as a match.

Ms. Feldmann emphasized how the Tree Advisory Board ought to play a key role in transposing the community gathered data into a new canopy plan matching the i-Tree analysis. Since the TAB is new, its role may be hard to integrate. The use of experts will be important for this grant.

The next meeting of the Tree Advisory Board will be Thursday, September 23rd at 4pm and will be via Zoom.

AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2021: Conversation with Commissioners of DPW, Buildings and Planning Department, including Planning Administrator, concerning implementation of the Ordinance as passed on December 23, 2021 by the City Council.


Eveline Feldmann, Chair

10/07/2021

Date

September 20, 2021
CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK
Tree Advisory Board
AGENDA - REVISED
For Thursday, September 23, 4:00 P.M.

The Invitation of Commissioners is postponed to a later date.
TAB members want to do some advance preparation before in-service education with the commissioners to maximize what can be accomplished.

Thursday 9/23/21 is a TAB-Only Preparation Session
for the future meeting with commissioners concerning implementation of the Ordinance.

- Review of accumulated draft documents:
(TO Content Overview / Tree Permit / Summary for land-use boards)
- Discuss any updates on technology
- Discuss a form of TAB presentation and introduction
- Prepare a list of department-specific questions
- Schedule a new date to invite Commissioners/Administrators of DPW, Planning and Building.