



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON

One Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
(914) 665-2352 · FAX (914) 668-6044

Tree Advisory Board (TAB)
MEETING NOTES
February 17, 2022, 4pm

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Tree Advisory Board was held on Thursday, February 17, 2022, 4:05pm via Zoom.

Attendance:

Voting members: Eveline Feldmann, Chair • Marlene H. Wertheim, Vice Chair • Henry May • Marlon Molina

Absent voting member: Vincent DeVito, tree surgeon, **Non-Voting:** Tanesia Walters, Deputy Clerk • Danielle Browne, Councilwoman • Shayne Brooks, Sustainability Director, **Guest:** Damani Bush, Commissioner

AGENDA

Approval of Minutes:

The February 3, 2022, Meeting Minutes were approved without any changes. A motion to accept was made by Ms. Wertheim and seconded by Mr. May.

TAB workflow & technology:

- **Work tool addition.** With the acknowledgement that the “Action Board” task list can be amended as needed, the TAB members present agreed to its regular use.
- **Web access for new code 252-Trees, codification.** When new laws are passed, signed legislation documents are scanned and “parked” under “new laws.” For the Tree Ordinance to be clearly and accurately presented it needs to be codified, thereby doing away with and replacing the 1957 version in the City Code. The Deputy City Clerk explained that the Comptroller has yet to be able to set up the invoice payment process. This and the budget process is what is holding up the codification. Every effort will be made to get this straightened out before the Arbor Day celebration.

Reports:

- TAB chair

- 1) The application for the 2022 TREE City USA status has been approved by the Arbor Day Foundation. And, by building an essential community framework with a Citizen Tree Board, we qualified for a first Growth Award for Mount Vernon. We’re doing the right things in collaborating and educating. We have received an invitation from the DEC Urban & Community Forestry team to participate in a recognition event to celebrate and share the achievements of communities such as ours, our Tree Ordinance story and all that has followed. The webinar will take place on March 17th at 10 a.m. As the time approaches, the announcement will be sent around. All members present were in support of accepting the invitation.
- 2) The Chair has sent a communication to the new Commissioner of Planning and Community Development James Rausse, welcoming him and letting him know that we look forward to working with him and continuing a collaboration that supports the greening of our city.
- 3) The Chair had forwarded to the Board a basic guideline statement governing participation at Board meetings. Since there was no reaction to it, we moved on.

- Arborist

Tree removal without permit at 153 Douglas Place: Vinny wasn’t present to share his observations. We view this as a case study – How would the code be consulted, a violation be determined and enforced, when indicated?

- Community

Review of documents related to 645 N MacQuesten Parkway clear cutting: Mr. Molina obtained the site plan and forwarded a hard-to-read digital image of the hard copy he had in hand. It was decided to table any further discussion until the next meeting, when the board will have a better copy. The Chair advised that, when looking at the material, we think about the status and extent of landscape from the perspective of the past vs. the present, the number of trees and the appropriate choice of trees, the time of approval and extension parameters. Mr. Molina assured us that any site plans from 2021 can be transmitted digitally.

Unfinished Business:

- Implementation of the tree ordinance and TAB integration

Tree permits procedure – review of DPW document. Ms. Wertheim met with Vinny to discuss and list issues in question – A significant tree is 8”, but the tree ordinance okays the removal of tree/s less than 10”. Instead of the stated removal without permit for 2 trees greater than 10”, should a permit be required for any tree greater than 8”? When are the guidelines considered justifiably intrusive to a private owner? How many can be taken down before it becomes a clearcutting?

Our discussion raised more questions than it answered. It was suggested that members of the TAB follow up with further research and consultation with outside experts.

- Review of the paragraph related to tree permits on the DPW website permit page

The Chair presented on screen the current paragraph and introduced a revised version that takes the language directly from the tree ordinance that is consistent with the tone of the other permit listings. The TAB was in accord with it, as was Commissioner Bush. Mr. Molina recommended legal advice to be in order before it is presented.

- Reporting procedure – review of new reporting categories list

Board member submitted suggestions to Mr. Molina to collect – Uprooted tree, stump, pest infestation, tree branches, mass tree removal, invasive species alert, car crash into tree, lightning strike on tree, construction accident on tree. Or, do we want to list simply tree violations? We concluded that our choices ought to reflect what is listed in the tree ordinance.

The additions would have to be approved by the legal dept. before incorporating into seeclickfix. These community reports would go to the Parks Supervisor who routes them to the appropriate dept. The question was raised as to whether the TAB would be privy to report referrals pertaining to the tree ordinance.

- Land-use referrals for TAB advisory

Mr. Molina indicated that he just sent the requested Millington St. documents to the Board members.

The Chair noted that the land-use-referral stream per TO ought to be clarified once we get to meet with the new Commissioner of Planning. In the meantime, Mr. Molina has advised the Dept. of Planning to copy the landscape plans that have been directed to the DPW.

Arbor Day 2022 Planning:

- Responsibilities

Commissioner Bush communicated that the DPW and TAB will jointly organize the event with Shayne Brooks assisting with resources, connections, and labor.

- Location ideas

Since Vinny was unable to attend today, he couldn’t share his prepared list of streets without trees that can be considered for a community planting event on Arbor Day. Community input is also valuable and can be directed to the Chair at efeldmanncmvny@gmail.com

New Business and Announcements:

We will meet again on Thursday, March 3, at 4 p.m.

With no new business or announcements, the meeting concluded at 5:16 p.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/mountvernonny/videos/1571948539850411/>



Eveline Feldmann, Chair

March 3, 2022

Date of Approval