



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON

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Tree Advisory Board (TAB)
MEETING MINUTES
July 21, 2022, 4pm

2022 SEP 23 P 1:07
MOUNT VERNON, NY

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Tree Advisory Board) was held on Thursday, July 21, 2022, 4:05 pm via zoom. The meeting was livestreamed on facebook.

Attendance

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

AGENDA

1 – Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes of July 7, 2022:

Marlene’s motion was seconded by Eveline. Marlon abstained. 4 Members voted to accept the documents as is.

2 – Reporting

2.1 Chair:

- The Comptroller has stated that he will soon follow up with the Tree Escrow Account financial statements.
- There was a request for a tree placement on Gramatan/Primrose which will be added to a planting list.

2.2 Tree Forester/DPW

- The tree crew has been active in beautification (flowers and shrubs) since May and is now back to their regular routine of doing tree work.
- Vinny is ordering 6 more cherry trees with Baldwin to replace those re-directed from the 4th Avenue planting plan to the roundabout shrubbery replacement. The Chair asked that TAB be notified re: their delivery and prospective planting dates so that the TAB and Vinny can stake them out prior at the community recommended locations along 4th Avenue.
- A removal of shrubs, stone edging work and some replanting was done by the Parks Crew at Stuyvesant Plaza.
- A vehicle with a trailer and water tank has been set out to do regular watering where needed.
- Vinny and John Montemarano /Parks are putting together a planting document of sites they gathered for new trees, which we can map along with the TAB requests from community.
- It will be 3 months before Vinny will know the results of his civil service exam for compliance to his position.

2.3. Dept. of Planning

- The application for a subdivision at 300 Nuber Ave. has been forwarded to the relevant depts. and the TAB. The Dept. is now awaiting comments from the recipients. They will continue to forward land-use application that deal with landscaping affecting trees.
- The Dept. is in the process of selecting a consultant for the Comprehensive Plan. Once consultant is selected a robust community engagement program with help from the TAB in reaching out to residents who care about sustainability and green spaces in our city will be underway.

3– Tree Removal Permit – Tree ordinance amendment

Our 5/26/22 TAB approved document, with the recommended changes, was given to the Corporation Counsel. His office retyped the ordinance subsequently, including the alterations. Our proofreading showed it will require some edits/corrections though. The TAB is eager to move a final recommendation on to the CC for approval so that we can proceed with an education program and tree removal permits. Trees are coming down; city residents are calling with complaints and concerns, and we have no recourse to offer them. Marlon

noted that the Corporation Counsel has expressed an intent to call a meeting to talk about the above and we will be included in the discussion. Once the attorney assigned to the TAB returns from vacation Marlon will set up that meeting on behalf of the TAB with Corporation Counsel and let us know.

4 – Land-use application: 300 Nuber Ave/E 4th St

Members were asked to have a look at the site and proposal in preparation for today’s meeting. The applicant has not reached out to the tree surgeon at this point. The chair prepared some photographs taken for the purpose of this discussion and to bridge the gap for those unfamiliar with the site. The group went over plans in the submission and shared their observations, concerns, and recommendations.

Where once stood one home, there is now a vacant property- an environmental eco system in a beautiful neighborhood with many old healthy trees. The applicant proposes to subdivide the property and construct three (3) 2-family houses with double garages and 3 separate driveways, 3 back decks with 3 small back yards. The landscape plan indicates the removal of many of the trees and addition of seasonal flowering plants and grasses, but no new trees. A tree schedule indicates 7 trees to be removed and 7 trees to keep. An Elevation Plan was not provided and puts any prospect of keeping trees into question. A clearcut of a property for subdivision is not an isolated incident in this neighborhood of larger old homes with mature trees and shaded streets. Recently a similar subdivision proposal one block away, at 0 Millington was granted to same applicant. The latter situation was resolved with the developer paying into the Tree Escrow Fund an amount equal to the cost of replacing the significant trees taken away. However, now with the duty of the TAB to weigh in, it is not looking to resolve in any monetary option or tree replacement elsewhere until all options regarding trees where they can grow on the property are taken into consideration and reviewed. The members conducted a healthy and fruitful discussion of this case. The TAB identifies a cumulative negative impact on the character of the neighborhood with the loss of mature canopy coverage. Saving any healthy significant trees, even along the property lines presents an added challenge due to higher density by subdivision. The added reduction of canopy in this area will have lasting effects in terms of health, wellness and rising temperatures, and neighborhood character. Marlon assured the group that developers tend to listen to the community. The TAB members are working on a detailed Tree Report to submit to the Planning Board by August 3rd.

5– Announcements

- Next regular TAB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21st, 2022, at 4 p.m.
- TAB Summer schedule: There will be no general meeting during the month of August.

-Neighborhood group “Neighbors that Care” have a tree-dedication event on Tuesday, August 2nd at South Columbus Avenue by Graham School.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m. was made by Eveline, seconded, by Marlene and Henry. A full recording of this meeting is accessible with this link:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=592822225700916&id=100068190484710



Eveline Feldmann, Chair

09/15/2022

Date of Approval