

Minutes

TREE BOARD

Regular meeting

9 a.m. May 15, 2024

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair Linda Paynter, Sharon Billings, Mixon Nelson, Thomas Darling and Gregory Yavelak

Absent: Jon Simpson

Staff: Public Space and Sustainability Manager Stephanie Trueblood

1. Call to order, roll call and confirmation of quorum

Chair Linda Paynter called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Public Space and Sustainability Manager Stephanie Trueblood called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

2. Agenda changes and approval

There were no changes to the agenda. The agenda stood as presented.

Motion: Member Sharon Billings moved to approve. Paynter seconded.

Vote: 5-0

3. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on April 17, 2024

Motion: Member Mixon Nelson moved approval of the April 17, 2024, minutes as submitted. Member Thomas Darling seconded.

Vote: 5-0

4. Discussion items

A. Debrief Earth Evening

Member Thomas Darling reported on a successful evening. The board displayed information on invasive species removal and provided complimentary seed bombs at the event. Trueblood reported that students from the Expedition School are interested in an invasive species removal and repopulation with native seed bombs project.

B. Discuss Treasure Tree selection for 2024

Trueblood updated the board on the Cottonwood tree nomination for the Tree Board's Treasure Tree of 2024. Darling described the tree, which is located along the Riverwalk. The treasure tree will have a small identification sign. Discussion ensued about the history of Cottonwood trees in the Hillsborough, NC area and affects of beavers on the trees. The board and Trueblood decided to continue preparation for the designation by email.

Motion: Billings moved to approve the Cottonwood tree on the Riverwalk as the 2024 Treasure Tree. Gregory Yavelak seconded.

Vote: 5-0

C. Review National Pollinator Week planning

Trueblood relayed updates to the board from Sarah Meadows, Hillsborough Garden Club Board of Directors.

- Five locations will distribute the wildflower of the year seeds in June.
- 250 packets of seeds were expected to be distributed at the Hillsborough Club Plant Sale.
- Bluebird houses and pollinator garden signs will be for sale.
- The Orange County Public Library will distribute pollinator garden handouts and seeds.
- The Chamber of Commerce and News of Orange will advertise for National Pollinator Week.
- Proclamations by the state of North Carolina and the Town of Hillsborough to recognize National Pollinator Week have been submitted.

5. Updates

A. Garden Club

Billings suggested including the Master Gardeners when referencing the Hillsborough Garden Club. The club's plant sale was successful.

B. Invasive Removal Team

Tim Logue reported the team is addressing Japanese knotweed infestations. He has drafted a treatment directive and described the need for education and outreach. Trueblood added that the Tree Board can designate some funds for treatment. The board discussed priority treatment areas as the Bellevue Branch section between West King Street towards the Eno River for potential mowing and treating.

C. Prohibited/Recommended Plant Lists Subcommittee

The board was provided a draft list in the agenda packet. The board will pick up discussion in August.

Mixon left at 9:44 a.m.

Trueblood recognized Paynter's work on the list and provided an overview of the prohibited list's role in the Unified Development Ordinance. A recommended plant list for Orange County was also shared by Paynter in the agenda packet.

D. Education/Outreach Materials Subcommittee

The committee is nearing completion. Trueblood requested the materials used to develop the Education/Outreach be returned. Logue suggested adding *From Wasteland to Wonder: Easy Ways we can Help Heal the Earth in the Sub/urban Landscape* (Camu, Basil, 2024).

E. Staff

Trueblood reported:

- Member Bridget Booher resigned from the Tree Board.
- Billings' and Paynter's terms are expiring. Logue and Brian Mayell will be eligible for Tree Board member confirmation at the Aug. 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting.
- The board wants to continue communications between the Hillsborough Garden Club and the Master Gardeners.
- In August, the board will vote in a temporary Vice Chair until annual elections are held in October.
- A dead Ash tree was removed near the Public Works building.
- Town planters, the town cemetery fountain and Bank of America parking lot garden beds were replanted with pollinator plants.

- The Hillsborough Garden Club was supposed to maintain the garden bed at Tulip Patch Park. Billings suggested contacting a Master Gardener to maintain it.
- Nelson continues to collaborate with the Fairview Community Watch Youth Group. Also, the watch has planted a native pollinator rain garden and constructed a cistern for rainwater harvesting at the Dorothy N. Johnson Community Center.
- Because of their decline, two Oak trees by the County Courthouse were removed.

Emmy Cole of the Forest Ridge neighborhood landscaping committee attended the board's meeting to clarify recommendations for planting in the neighborhood.

5. Adjournment

Paynter adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie Trueblood".

Stephanie Trueblood
Public Space and Sustainability Manager
Staff support to the Tree Board

Approved: August 21, 2024