

Presentation

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| Agenda Item # | 1 |
| Meeting Date | February 2, 2015 |
| Prepared By | Todd M. Bolton City Arborist |
| Approved By | Suzanne R. Ludlow Acting City Manager |

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| Discussion Item | Annual Report from the City Arborist on Tree Related Issues for 2014 |
| Background | Every year the arborist provides a report to the Council identifying significant activities affecting the urban forest. This year, Todd Bolton has prepared a written report regarding tree planting, maintenance and removal activity within the City. |
| Fiscal Impact | None |
| Attachments | Written report |
| Recommendation | Council to receive annual report. |
| Special Consideration | |

Annual Report to Takoma Park City Council Urban Forest Program, Calendar Year 2014

Presented Feb. 2, 2015, Todd M. Bolton

The urban forestry program continued to evolve in minor ways over the last year. This year more energy was spent trying to bring City-owned property in line with the invasive control part of the ordinance so that we can begin a higher level of enforcement on private property.

The regular block pruning was completed in late February, and will begin in the next week or so for this season.

There was a set of cherry trees planted in 2013 that failed and was to be replaced during the fall. However, the nursery was unable to find the same variety at the right size in time for fall planting. The trees will be replaced this spring.

Street trees are planted following the guidelines established for homeowner participation developed several years back. In this process, letters with a postcard were mailed to all of the property owners abutting the ROW. Each postcard had a list of three trees suitable for the side of the road that the residence was on. There were 45 responses received out of 79 mailed. Eleven property owners did not want trees in the ROW in front of their property. We ended up with 97 trees being planted along Baltimore, Albany and Boyd Avenues.

The bulk buy program was held both in spring and the fall; 28 trees were sold. Seven trees were sold with the \$100 subsidy. The first use of the Pre-planting for Credit occurred during the spring 2014 bulk buy sale. Another homeowner submitted his forms last fall.

Approximately 400 tree seedlings were given away at the Arbor Day celebration and follow up activities by the Tree Commission. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Takoma Park Recreation staff participated in the Arbor Day event.

Private tree removals have declined significantly over the last two years. The following table lists permit related activities from 2011 through 2014.

| Removals | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Trees applied for | 228 | 282 | 338 | |
| Denial (# of trees) | 11 | 17 | 20 | 84 |
| Permits Issued (# of trees) | 49 | 72 | 81 | 53 |
| Waivers (# of trees) | 123 | 126 | 175 | 179 |
| Undesirable Species (# of trees) | 8 | 24 | 26 | 25 |
| Total Private Removals | 180 | 222 | 282 | 261 |

Tree impact assessments and protection plan permits were about the same as 2013.

| Other Permits | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tree Impact Assessments | 64 | 62 | 60 | 65 |
| Tree Protection Plan Permits | 7 | 8 | 17 | 22 |

Replacement planting requirements for 2014 were met with 51 replacement trees and \$7,350 in payments of the fee in lieu.

Pepco and the other utilities have continued to upgrade and replace large segments of their infrastructure in the City. For the most part, these projects have been tree neutral with WSSC and Washington Gas using boring techniques when they are outside the pavement. One example is the 2.5 mile water main replacement coming in New Hampshire Gardens. City staff walked the proposed project with WSSC staff and their contract engineers. The original proposal requested removal of 14 trees. During the walk, methods to preserve seven of those trees were developed and added to the plans.

Pepco again requested removals of quite a few public and private trees, but accepted my denial or worked to mitigate the removals. Several of the removals for homeowners were going to be required soon and the removal saved the homeowner significant costs.

I have continued to review and correct the data in the street and park tree inventory using a handheld computer. Due to the confusion over exact locations of property lines and ROW limits there are still some questionable trees and sites in the inventory.