

## **CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE**

### **TREE COMMISSION**

#### **BY-LAWS**

**January 24, 2011**

#### **SECTION I: CREATION, NAME, NUMBER OF MEMBERS**

By action of City Council, on December 20, 2010, a Tree Commission was established for the City of Charlottesville. The Commission shall be comprised of ten (10) CITIZEN members, at least two (2) of which shall be representatives of low-income neighborhoods.

Three ADDITIONAL SEATS shall be reserved for:

City Arborist (ex-officio)

Planning Commission Representative

Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards or successor organization

The remaining seats on the Commission shall be appointed at-large by City Council.

#### **SECTION II: APPOINTMENT AND LENGTH OF TERM OF COMMISSIONERS**

Citizen members of the Commission shall be appointed by City Council. Terms of service shall be three (3) years, with a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

Vacancies occurring on the Tree Commission as a result of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be advertised and appointed by City Council at the earliest possible opportunity. Such appointments will complete the unexpired term of the vacant seat, and are eligible for appointment to up to two full three (3) year terms upon the completion of the unexpired term.

#### **SECTION III: PURPOSE**

The Tree Commission will serve strictly in an advisory role assisting City Council, the Planning Commission and City staff on issues regarding tree planting, protection, preservation and removal. The intent of the Commission is to protect and improve the urban forest, which provides better quality of life for City residents and provides environmental and aesthetic benefits, by preserving and monitoring all trees located on public right-of-ways and public property. The Commission will stay informed about local changes and intentions involving trees and plans for public lands and infrastructure in the City. It will advocate for trees before City Council and the Planning Commission. The Commission will also advise on protection of trees and tree canopy on private properties as appropriate. The Commission will work toward enhancing the diversity and health of the tree canopy in Charlottesville.

## **SECTION IV: DUTIES**

The Tree Commission's duties are as follows:

### **A – Comprehensive Study of Trees**

The Commission will work to provide a comprehensive study of trees located within the City. By referring to the Virginia Department of Forestry and the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, the Commission will conduct an evaluation of the trees to better assist Council, Commission, and City staff on decisions related to planting, preservation, protection, removal, and landscaping.

### **B - Engage and educate the public and youth:**

Expand awareness of Charlottesville's tree and forestry management efforts and issues. Develop a relationship with civic and stewardship organizations, and local schools to educate about the importance of preserving trees and maintaining the urban forest. Organize tree planting activities, walking tours, or workshops that allow the public and youth to gain a hands-on approach towards tree conservation and identification. Encourage fieldwork studies among City schools to bring awareness to young people about the importance of preserving trees and maintaining the urban forest. Educate the public about valuable landmark and specimen trees in Charlottesville. Encourage new planting and maintenance by citizens with a focus on educating home owners about tree standards suitable for Charlottesville. Establish meetings with property owners within the City to inform them of tree standards suitable for Charlottesville. Encourage the involvement of residents in public housing with the work and projects of the Commission.

### **C - Advise Council on pertinent legislation:**

The Commission will inform Council on any enabling legislation the Commission deems appropriate for the City to incorporate into the annual Legislative Program. The Commission will also advise Council, Planning Commission, and City staff on progressive, sustainable urban forest management policies and methods that may be suitable for the City.

### **D - Develop a street tree master list:**

Develop a master list of street trees suitable for the City. The Commission will refer to the City's existing street tree list and provide suggestions on improving and updating the list. The Commission will only suggest trees that adhere to site development regulations.

### **E- Assist with implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan:**

Work with the City Arborist to assist with the implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Suggest ordinances and policies to Council that include appropriate alterations to the City's Urban Forest Management Plan. Assist the city arborist with studies, projects, and finding volunteer help with tree care. Observe on an ongoing basis that tree protection guidelines are adhered to.

F - Develop and update a long-range preservation plan:

Create a plan outlining long-term tree care that includes irrigation, pruning, and other annual activities.

G - Maintain tree inventory:

Maintain and update an inventory of trees located on all public lands. The inventory will be a tool for the Commission to monitor tree health and priority areas.

H - Study and revise the 1975 Street Tree Master Plan

The Commission will examine the 1975 Street Tree Master Plan and make a recommendation to Council regarding the revisions and degree of implementation of that plan.

#### **SECTION V: ATTENDANCE AND COMPENSATION**

Any member who fails to attend at least 75% of the regularly scheduled meetings, meetings of the standing committees, and or any subcommittees of the Commission, during any twelve month period, may be removed by a majority vote of the Commission.

Commissions shall serve without compensation.

#### **SECTION VI: MEETINGS**

The Tree Commission shall meet at a minimum quarterly, or as called by the Chair with not less than 10 calendar days notice.

A quorum must be present before official action of any kind can be taken. Quorum shall constitute a simple majority of non-staff members.

#### **SECTION VII: SELECTION OF OFFICERS**

At the first meeting of the Tree Commission in each calendar year, the Commission shall select from its members and appoint by a majority vote, a Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission. The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve in that capacity for the following twelve (12) month period.

#### **SECTION VIII: STAFF SUPPORT**

Staff support to the Tree Commission will be assigned by the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. Additional staff support (when required) will be provided by other City Departments on an as needed basis.

**SECTION IX: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended by vote of a majority of the Commission at any meeting provided, however, notice of such proposed amendment shall be given to each member of the commission in writing at least five days prior to such meeting.