

Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board



Minutes for the Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board Meeting – 10 September, 2024

Board Chairman Jim Harris called this meeting to order at 1:33PM

Chairman Harris began the meeting by introducing guest attendee Mike Weyend, a Business Development Specialist with the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture. Mike is chiefly responsible for overseeing the county's agricultural easements. After board members introduced themselves to Mike, he summarized some aspects of his work and engaged in a brief discussion about preservation and forest stewardship with the board. Mike noted that about 70,000 acres of land are protected by easements in the county, and he also explained how the Montgomery County Forest Mitigation Bank Program works.

The previous meeting's minutes were approved with minor corrections suggested by Joe Howard.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Joli McCathran summarized the board's account activity from the month of May 2024 through present. On May 25, 2024, she wrote a check to Joe Howard in the amount of \$139.13 as a reimbursement for a commemorative plaque that he purchased for emeritus board member Linda Pepe. A deposit in the amount of \$650.00 was credited to the account on June 6, 2024, by Ashton Manor Environmental to fund the Natural Resources Career Camp (NRCC). Joli sent \$1,000.00 to the Maryland Forestry Foundation for NRCC funds on June 28, 2024. Grant money in the amount of \$4,998.20 was deposited to the account from the Maryland Urban and Community Forest Committee and the Maryland Department of Transportation. Joli also applied for a \$5,000 grant from Pepco, which remains pending. The overall account balance is \$5,055.85.

Chair's Report

Chairman Jim Harris asked board members to ensure that their contact information is correct, and to submit any corrections or revisions to Board Secretary Chris Barger. Treasurer Joli McCathran asked Jim to add Tim Culbreth to the board's email list as an acquittance. Jim mentioned that board member Eddie Franceshi has departed his position at WSSC Water in Montgomery County and will no longer participate in board membership. Jim prompted the board to consider whether a new member should be admitted to the board to replace Eddie's membership. Jim commended the Montgomery County Department of Transportation for their quality work involving new sidewalk installation in the Seven Locks Road neighborhood. Jim finally raised the issue of when the board should hold a luncheon for emeritus board member Linda Pepe. The luncheon would feature an official dedication of a tree to Linda and commemorate her vast contribution to the board. Board member Carole Bergmann mentioned that she would ask Linda if October or November would suit Linda's availability better for the luncheon.

Legislative Report

No legislative report was given at this meeting.

Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board



DNR Report

No DNR report was given at this meeting.

New Business

Board member Lee Derby championed greater engagement among Montgomery County Public Schools and the board. He suggested that a subset of board members should convene to draft an outline or brainstorm outreach activities that would be appropriate for different school levels. He and the subset of board members would then present these formed ideas for greater and more organized outreach activities to the board for approval and discussion. This plan would hopefully provide a more concrete approach to outreach that the board can follow.

Board Secretary Chris Barger sincerely thanked board members for their congratulations on Chris' recent wedding and marriage.

Board member Carole Bergmann mentioned if anyone is interested in Agricultural preservation that they please contact her. Carole also mentioned that she and Treasurer Joli McCathran recently led a walk to tour some of Montgomery County's champion trees.

Board Member Joe Howard was wondering in frustration about when the luncheon for emeritus board member Linda Pepe would take place. He suggested inviting David Plummer, Pete Staley, and another person to the luncheon. Joe commented that the Franklinia tree planted for Linda is doing well, and he encouraged Chairman Jim Harris to prune deadwood out of a fringe tree. Joe also shared a thank-you note from a woman thanking Joe for a tree that was planted in memory of her deceased brother under the Tree-Mendous Maryland program. Joe finally commented that the spectacular three-pronged tulip poplar tree located in the Aspen Hill neighborhood has been removed by its owner.

Guest attendee Andres Ovalle mentioned that board member Laura Miller is working on the Arbor Day proclamation, and that they received a new grant to plant 1,400 trees on the premises of 20 to 25 schools in Montgomery County.

Treasurer Joli McCathran mentioned that she gave Cindy Stevens, a representative with the Izaak Walton League of America's Rockville Chapter the phone number of the student that the organization funded to attend the 2024 Natural Resources Career Camp (NRCC). Joli also wrote a thank-you letter to Ashton Manor Environmental for their funding for NRCC, and she encouraged the student that Ashton Manor Environmental funded to reach out to them and do likewise. Joli commented on some new big tree nominations, she mentioned that she compiled a list of the greatest trees of all time within the State of Maryland, and she also cited some statistics from the champion tree website. She mentioned that she would like board member Lee Derby to plant a descendent of the Liberty tree on the Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center's grounds. Joli added that the fall state forestry board meeting is proposed for November 9, 2024 at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. Joli finished by noting that the Maryland Forestry Foundation will be hosting a webinar discussing the value of old-growth forests on September 19, 2024.

Chairman Jim Harris adjourned this meeting at 3:06PM.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 8 October, 2024 at 1:30PM. The meeting will be located at the Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center's library at 5110 Meadowside Lane in Rockville, MD 20855.

Attendance:

Jim Harris, Board Chairman
Joli McCathran, Board Treasurer
Lee Derby, Board Member
Joe Howard, Board Member
Mary Howard, Guest
Carole Bergmann, Board Member
Paula Perez, Board Member
Andrés Ovalle, Guest
Harris Trobman, Guest
Mike Weyend, Guest
Christopher Barger, Board Secretary