

Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board



Minutes for the Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board Meeting – 14 January 2025

This meeting was held at McCathran Hall in the Town of Washington Grove due to emergency maintenance work at the Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center. Board Treasurer Joli McCathran expresses her appreciation to the town for accommodating the venue on short notice. Board Chairman Jim Harris called this meeting to order at 1:37 PM

At 1:38 PM, board members introduced themselves to guest attendees Jack Pond and John Stuart, two arborists working for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

Chair's Report (1:42 PM)

Chairman Jim Harris mentioned that Board Member Norman King III was visiting Los Angeles, California to help his son relocate. At 1:44 PM Jim asked the board to review the minutes from the previous board meeting that occurred on 12 November 2024. The minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Treasurer's Report (1:44 PM)

Treasurer Joli McCathran summarized the board's account activity since 12 November 2024: Joli wrote a check in the amount of \$68.55 to her husband on 11 December 2024 for purchasing a website domain name. A \$100 deposit was credited to the account on 24 December 2024. Joli wrote two checks on 30 December 2024, one to Board Member Vince Fillah in the amount of \$69.01 and the other to herself in the amount of \$341.03. Both checks correspond to reimbursement of mileage costs. The former combined account balance was \$5,055.85 and the current combined account balance is \$4,677.26, corresponding to a net change of -\$378.59.

Legislative Report (1:48 PM)

No legislative report was given at this meeting.

DNR Report (1:49 PM)

No DNR report was given at this meeting.

New Business (1:50 PM)

At 1:50 PM Board Member Carole Bergmann mentioned that she had been travelling to the Olympic Peninsula in the Pacific Northwest since the last board meeting, and she highly recommends the area as a travel destination. Carole mentioned that she participated as a panel member for an invasive species event hosted by a Washington Chapter of Wild Ones. Carole petitioned the board's interest in learning more about invasive plants, and she encouraged that the board should emphasize teaching awareness of invasive species.

At 1:55 PM, Board Member Natasha Shangold commented that the City of Rockville will employ a new forest conservation planner soon. In the meantime, however, she will continue conducting field inspections herself. Natasha mentioned that she gave a worthwhile presentation to second-grade students at Harriet Tubman Elementary School in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

At 2:00 PM Board Treasurer Joli McCathran mentioned that the board received a \$3,000 deposit from Pepco to fund this year's session of the Natural Resources Career Camp. Joli mentioned

Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board



that John Bennett, Chairman of the Maryland Big Tree Program Committee will be hosting a tree reunion event in March 2025. Joli also mentioned that the spring meeting of the Forestry Board Association will occur on March 6, 2025, at Greenbrier State Park in Boonsboro, Maryland. Joli concluded with the fact that she will be attending *Root Ball: The 2025 National Tree Champion Gala*, an event held by the National Big Tree Program on 18 January 2025 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

At 2:11 PM Board Member Lee Derby expressed his gratitude to Board Treasurer Joli McCathran for providing a venue to host the current board meeting. Lee mentioned that Nature Forward will be conducting many tree plantings at various schools this year including one at Washington Grove Elementary School in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is working in some capacity with Nature Forward to accomplish these tree plantings. Lee then inquired about the status of a tree identification project to occur at MCPS properties.

At 2:13 PM Guest Attendee Jack Pond introduced himself to the board. Jack is an arborist with Montgomery County's Department of Transportation Division of Highway Services. Jack commented that he is responsible for maintaining tree plantings and removals in the county's rights-of-way. He noted that each year, the county plants about 2,500 right-of-way trees but removes about 3,200 right-of-way trees. He asked if any board member had experience with GIS mapping, because he is interested in incorporating GIS mapping of right-of-way trees to keep track of them. A long discussion ensued among board members and guests about creating GIS layers of champion trees and school tree plantings.

At 2:29 PM Board Member Andrés Ovalle commented that he has been working through the tree planting season with Montgomery County's Tree Montgomery Program. He mentioned that thus far, the program has processed about 3,000 trees using grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Currently, Andrés is working to develop planting plans for about 20 schools within MCPS.

At 2:31 PM Assistant Board Chairman Dan Landry shared that his daughter built a free library at Piney Run Park in Sykesville, Maryland, and that she authored a book titled *Sassy the Squirrel Discovers a Forest*. Her work was devoted toward attaining a Gold Award through the Girl Scouts of the USA.

At 2:35 PM Board Member Joe Howard shared a book called *The Tree Collectors* by Amy Stewart. Joe brought Board Member Vince Fillah a gift bag featuring the Arbor Day Foundation's name. Joe purported that the gift was in return for a shirt that Vince gifted to Joe which read "Easily Distracted by Trees".

Finally, at around 2:50 PM, Assistant Board Chairman Dan Landry quizzed the board asking how many oak trees were harvested to rebuild the spire of the Notre Dame Cathedral. Dan did not disclose an answer, though various online sources cite that over 1,000 oak trees were felled¹²³.

¹ Hundreds of Centuries-Old Trees Felled to Rebuild Notre-Dame's Iconic Spire. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/dozens-century-old-oak-trees-felled-rebuild-notre-dame-cathedrals-iconic-spire-180977481/> (accessed 10 March 2025).

² After centuries in the ground, these French oaks will soon form part of the new spire at Notre Dame. <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/notre-dame-rebuild-oak-trees/index.html> (accessed, 10 March 2025).

Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board



Chairman Jim Harris adjourned this meeting at 2:50 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 11 February 2025 at 1:30 PM. The meeting will be located at the Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center's library at 5110 Meadows Lane in Rockville, MD 20855.

Attendance:

Jim Harris, Board Chairman
Dan Landry, Assistant Board Chairman
Joli McCathran, Board Treasurer
Chris Barger, Board Secretary
Carole Bergmann, Board Member
Lee Derby, Board Member
Joe Howard, Board Member
Mary Howard, Guest
Andrés Ovalle, Board Member
Jack Pond, Guest
Natasha Shangold, Board Member
John Stuart, Guest

³ Oaks Felled for Notre Dame. <https://www.internationaloaksociety.org/content/oaks-felled-notre-dame> (accessed 10 March 2025).