

**WASHINGTON COUNTY FORESTRY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
March 6, 2024**

Present: Judy Niedzielski, Don Grove, Linda Grove, Greg Bartles, Mary Jo Bartles, Doug Inkley, Kate Bucco, and Aaron Cook.

Arbor Day Tree Packaging – Aaron relayed that WCPS needs to have the trees on 3/25 in order to get them into each classroom before spring break (3/29-4/1), as any later and they won't get to the students by MD Arbor Day (we can blame an early Easter for this compressed schedule). The trees will come up from the nursery on 3/21, the plan is to package at Don & Linda's on 3/22 at 12:30. Aaron will send an email with directions and to serve as a reminder. Aaron has printed and sorted the planting instruction letters, and has all of the packaging supplies ready to go.

Outreach- Flower & Garden Show (March 16 & 17) @ the ARC building at Hagerstown Community College: Aaron and Greg will set up the booth on Friday at 1pm. Saturday is 9-5. Saturday morning shift (9-1) is being staffed by Grace and Bob, Doug and Bob will cover the afternoon (1-5). Sunday is 10-4. Sunday morning (10-1) is being staffed by Don & Linda, Aaron and Kate will cover the afternoon (1-4) and help tear down with Greg. Aaron has the free trees, and other fact sheets and trinkets ready to go. The display has been updated, thanks for all of the contributions on this effort!

Arbor Day Poster contest – The Board received 4 posters, all from Cascade Elementary School. The contest was open for a shorter period this year, it was good to have some entries. Aaron explained that we are sending all of our posters down to Annapolis this year to flood the judging space for the First Lady. The Board selected first, second, and third place. Aaron will send certificates and a letter to the art teacher, along with an offer to plant trees at the school regardless of the statewide award announcement. Discussion about how to better reach students next year centered around asking the County Art Museum to put a flyer up, and asking the County Library in Hagerstown to display the posters.

Other Business –

- **The Forestry Board Association Meeting** – The meeting will be a summit, held over 3 days (6/10-12) at a hotel in Annapolis. At least 2 board members from each board will have their expenses covered. Stay tuned for additional information
- **NRCC Committee** – The NRCC committee has asked for new volunteers to join them in planning this annual event. Aaron shared the flyer with the board.
- **E-Bill/ MUCFC & MDOT grants** – Aaron helped set up E-Bill to electronically transfer funds. This was at the request of Dawn Balinski, and replaces a slower and less secure process of mailing MUCFC & MDOT grant funds to the board. A question was asked about this, and Aaron explained that when schools or local municipalities are working on an appropriate project, they can apply to MUCFC for grants. The grant application comes to the Board for review and sign-off, and is then sent down to be considered. If approved for grant funding, the money passes through the local board. The board had 2 of each grant awarded in Washington County this year, all groups have been working with MFS Tree Planting Specialist Anna Twigg.
- **Workshop?** – Aaron suggested that our plans to host a workshop about spotted lanternfly may need to be scuttled, as the pest is considered established in nearly

all of the state, and MDA has been reducing their outreach efforts on this pest. He has been considering alternative fundraising/ outreach efforts, and thought that a pollinator workshop where participants make a solitary bee nest box might be a good option. The board discussed whether this was in line with our forestry mission, alternative ideas of a weed ID/ Control workshop, benefits of urban trees to property values, and a bird watching workshop were suggested. Aaron encouraged everyone to think up some more ideas, and at the next meeting there may be a good idea to move forward with. If it is a smaller event, more workshop locations present themselves. He highlighted the cost of sending a camper to NRCC, and that the board doesn't have a regular income.

- **Alternate Date for April Meeting** – Aaron has been named the 2024 Maryland Tree Farm Inspector of the Year, and will be at the State House in Annapolis on MD Arbor Day (4/3). This would be the next regular board meeting, the board agreed to meet on the following Wednesday (4/10).

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3 PM. **The next regular business meeting will be on April 10 at 2PM.**