

Matthews Appearance & Tree Board

May 21, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Debbie Foster, Jill Palmer, Ashley McCraney, , Brian Antal, Karen Dixon, Lisa Kerner, Pamela Tobin, Ralph Ramsauer

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Old Business: At the informal meeting on April 17, Debbie Foster volunteered to be board president, Jill Palmer volunteered to be board vice president, and Lisa Kerner volunteered to be board secretary.

Members are to notify Debbie Foster if they will not be attending a meeting to ensure the board will have a quorum.

New Business:

Mission Statement

The group discussed expanding the Board's mission statement to address tree canopy awareness.

The group agreed to add the following language to the Mission Statement to include: "preserving the tree canopy, beautifying the landscape, supporting wildlife habitat and pollinators in order to make Matthews a cleaner, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing community."

Native Plants Ordinance

There was discussion about development and tree replacement. The board would like the Town Council to approve the ordinances to "give them some teeth."

The current Native Plants Ordinance requires a minimum of 75% use of natives on town-owned properties, including replacement plantings. The board is recommending this be changed to a minimum of 50%, which is more realistic.

Also, the current ordinance requires new development to use at least 50% natives in landscaping. The board is recommending that this be decreased to a more realistic 30%. In addition, the board recommends changing the wording to "at least 50% natives in landscaping, including trees."

Report on meeting with Town Commission.

Debbie reported on a successful meeting with the Town Commission. All of the members shared their concerns and asked questions.

Topics included Pleasant Plains Bridge widening, Windsor Run development, tree ordinance and landscaping as an identifying factor in Matthews.

The bridge widening would be in cooperation with Mecklenburg County. The Commission is seeking a budget for this project. Ralph said the project would include planting more trees.

Ralph agreed to mow the overgrown grass occasionally and possibly plant trees at the Windsor Run development. Debbie suggested plantings for pollination and butterflies. Funding may be available from the Highway Department for those plantings.

There is an existing Tree Ordinance. The board discussed where trees should be saved and how to encourage developers save more trees. One suggestion is to remove the option for developers to make a payment in lieu of saving trees, or to require replanting of trees. There was discussion about saving trees of a certain diameter and increasing the percentage of trees saved. Ralph can get photos from Virginia where trees are saved inside of a development. It was suggested that developers save 15% of the trees outside of the development, and 5% on the inside.

The board discussed signage and plantings that identify Matthews and whether it is practical to have these markers be identical. Ralph mentioned that not all areas are conducive to similar plantings and that boulders may also be used.

Brainstorming

The board discussed many ways to educate the public about its mission and listed projects that it wants to accomplish. Ralph suggested the development of an arboretum in Matthews. Other ideas included a native plant and tree sale on Earth Day, possibly in conjunction with another group., eco-tours, more bike-friendly areas, ladybug release, more holiday celebrations downtown a history component, tree markers, celebration trees, meeting with developers prior to development and increasing social media. Ashley expressed willingness to work on social media. Karen suggested short, informational "HabiTips."

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on June 18 at 7:00 p.m., possibly at Squirrel Lake Park.