

March 7, 2022 Virtual Board Meeting via Zoom 1:00-3:00 pm EST

Attending: Robin Hanes, Barbara White, JoAnn Dalley, Michelle Cormier, Alison Brill, Tim Maywalt, Mary Spear, Penny Kaiserlian, Mark Zollinhofer, Kathy Nepote, Libby Gretz, Rachel Keen, Emily Ferguson, Anne Bentham (Anne had to leave before her turn to speak)

Secretary: Alison Brill

The motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt the minutes of the February 2022 Board meeting as submitted.

President's Report: Robin Hanes

Robin called for a discussion of whether to use both people's first and last names on the agenda. The Board agreed that full names be used initially and only first names thereafter.

Robin reported that, at the last potting party there were 14 volunteers, and that she offered an extra table to accommodate social distancing for those concerned about COVID. Nobody took her up on the offer. This prompted a discussion of whether CATS should change its policy on COVID restrictions. CATS ads presently say that masks are recommended.

Tim expressed concern that COVID is still with us, and that the risk is underappreciated.

Libby's opinion was that people who are worried about the risks will wear masks without being asked. At the tree sale, CATS will have extra masks available. As for leading tree walks at the tree sale, JoAnne felt that those who are worried about themselves or their vulnerable family members should refrain from leading walks. Barbara pointed out that CATS members are all volunteers and should not feel pressured to do anything that makes them uncomfortable.

Barbara motioned, a second was made, and the motion passed that on the CATS website, the wording will be, "Masks recommended but not required," which essentially will mean that this is the CATS official policy.

A beautiful, healthy Cryptomeria has been planted at Emmanuel Church, and Robin has been communicating with folks there about caring for the tree. Another tree is being planted on Thursday, a White Oak to replace another there.

Per Robin, the spring tree sale planning is going well.

Fran Boninti contacted Robin about possibly putting a team together to map out tree walks on the properties that will be open for Historic Garden Week in April. Tim and Kathy can work on this.

Robin nominated Dave White to be an associate member of CATS, noting his appropriate background and interests. **JoAnne moved that Dave White be inducted as an associate member of CATS, Kathy seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Regarding the CATS picnic, Robin reported that she had spoken to Melinda Crawford at the Charlottesville Albemarle Airport about gathering under or near the Earlysville Oak. Apparently, Melinda receives an overwhelming number of requests for holding events there, so is hesitant to give permission. Nonetheless, Robin plans to follow up and see if Melinda could be persuaded to allow an event there for CATS.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of having a picnic under or around the E'ville Oak. Issues included noise from planes, limited parking, damage to the tree roots, and various other logistical concerns.

Several people favored Chris Greene park as the venue, instead.

Tim suggested that a field trip to see the Earlysville Oak might be preferable.

Report on CATS'S Involvement with OLLI: Rachel Keen

Six different CATS members have developed and delivered lectures to OLLI. The lectures do not constitute a course, but are independent presentations. They were very well-received by the OLLI audience, so OLLI requested the CATS presenters to deliver their talks again. The CATS members have agreed to present their lectures at OLLI once more. This year, the lectures will be in April and May.

Since the talks are self-contained, and are not the property of OLLI, each could conceivably be given at CATS membership meetings, as part of Tree Basics, held in reserve for times when scheduled speakers cancel, etc. Each lecture lasts an hour, so would fit into many slots as needed.

Report on Eventbrite for Event Registration: Emily Ferguson

Emily had been investigating the best method to use for broadcasting about and registering for tree walks. A couple of the issues with using MailChimp are that the person does not get immediate feedback that they're registered and the app does not send reminder emails to the registrants.

Emily walked everyone through a mock-up of an event.

Features of using Eventbrite include:

- Instant feedback to users confirming their registration;
- Zoom links sent automatically;
- Email reminders generated for registrants;
- Benefits for the organization, which include: adding registrants' email addresses to the CATS mailing list automatically, data on how the ticket was sold and how many people register, an automatic list of people registered, the app's ease of use, availability of additional features to integrate later, the enormous time savings it would allow, and how using Eventbrite would make transitioning the task of registration to new people very simple.

Costs associated with Eventbrite are nominal. If the event is free, Eventbrite is free. If there is a charge for the event, Eventbrite charges approximately 3% of the cost of the event. If CATS were to use Eventbrite for class registration, for example, it would cost about \$10 per registrant. To date, CATS events have been free, but when charges are levied, Eventbrite can link to the CATS bank account.

The features discussed are part of the "Professional" version of Eventbrite.

The account has already been set up.

Barbara motioned, the motion was seconded, and the motion passed to adopt the use of Eventbrite as presented.

Tree Commission Report: Mark Zollinhofer

Mark commented that the Charlottesville Tree Commission's work right now is like "marching in molasses." Because of COVID and the understaffed Parks and Rec department, among other things, the issues the Tree Commission addresses are on the back burner at the City.

There is a new Urban Forester, however. Steve Gaines begins his job April 11. His hiring has caused general excitement, especially because he will be on the job during Arbor Day celebrations, which will give him a good feel for how the Tree Commission, City departments, CATS, etc. all interact with regard to the mission of promoting trees in Charlottesville.

The City has planted about 132 trees in various locations, including parks and residential areas. 32 dogwoods remain to plant.

CATS members who have seen the newly planted trees commented that the planting techniques used by the City leave some things to be desired. They have witnessed deer damage, gator bag errors and omissions, canopies still tied up, and mistakes with staking. Mark said he will pass this information along.

Mark reported that the Canopy Study, done every five years, has been changed. This document determines where trees should be planted. Another study, the Mall Tree Survey, has been dormant, but there is hope that it will move forward now that a new urban forester has been hired.

CATS and the Tree Commission plan to coordinate on Arbor Day events. Several possible locations are being considered, including around a remarkable American Elm or a notable Boundary Oak. Robin has talked with Lori Bennett about signage. Discussions about the celebration are ongoing.

Past President's Report: Barbara White

Barbara reported that the video about pruning that DOF is producing is coming along. DOF will own it and have it, but CATS will have access to it.

Work on our part of the video is scheduled for March 14.

The segment on equipment might be good for William Hamersky to do; Tim will ask William if he is interested.

President Elect's Report: JoAnn Dalley

JoAnn told the Board that she had attended the Woods and Wildlife conference in Culpepper. CATS received a couple of mentions by speakers. JoAnne set up a self-serve table with CATS literature for people to take, and she also ran into the several inactive members of CATS who live in Madison.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Cormier

Michelle let the Board know that the bank merger is complete. The CATS bank account is now at Truist.

Michelle is to send acknowledgment to all donors who give an amount under \$250 and Robin thanks those giving \$250 or more.

The documents necessary for the CATS tax return are ready to give to the accountant.

Michelle has initiated a dispute with SurveyMonkey through the credit card company.

Michelle requested the contact information for Emmanuel Church for CATS's donation of \$100 and a tree.

Mary inquired as to whether CATS was going to donate \$500 to the Ivy Creek Foundation or pay them \$35 per use of the building. Ivy Creek favors the one-time donation for ease of accounting. **A motion was made, seconded, and approved to donate \$500 to Ivy Creek this year.**

A spreadsheet detailing CATS's technical subscriptions is complete. Board members received it via email. Currently, CATS uses nine subscriptions – MailChimp is not included because it is free. The subscription to QuickBooks also does not appear on the spreadsheet because CATS currently uses Michelle's personal software version.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the 2022 budget as submitted with an amendment adding the \$500 donation to Ivy Creek.

Education Committee: Tim Maywalt and Mary Spear

Tim reported that the 2022 class will take place August 9 – November 12. There will be three new topics in the curriculum this year: Forest Ecology, Climate Change, and Advocacy.

A walk at the Stokes property is scheduled for April 1. This is only for CATS members. Another walk may be set up if there is enough demand and Phil wants to do it.

A tree walk may be scheduled at UV when the Ulee Magnolia blooms; it will be open only to CATS members.

The presentation for late March is on selecting, planting and caring for trees. April's presentation is on spring invasives.

Communications Committee: Penny Kaiserlian

Mary Spear mocked up a way to pay dues through the CATS website using PayPal. She took the Board through the steps.

There was extensive discussion about the differences between students paying tuition, members paying dues, and anyone making a donation. Questions arose about how the treasurer would be able to identify whether someone had paid their dues AND made a donation at the same time. Mary said that she can go into PayPal and see if she can add different fields in order to make mixed payments clear to Michelle. She asked for permission to do so. Whether adding more functionality to the app will lead to higher payments to PayPal needs to be explored, as does the issue of whether to request that those who use PayPal add to their payment the fee PayPal charges CATS.

Libby noted that CATS needs a way to record the addresses of members paying their dues. Michelle will look into whether PayPal offers a way to do this. Michelle and Libby feel that they communicate well at this time as far as keeping track of who pays membership dues.

Shopify was mentioned as perhaps an alternative to PayPal in the future. Unlike PayPal, Shopify is free. Michelle said she would investigate.

Tim moved, the motion was seconded, and the motion passed that CATS add PayPal to its website as a way to pay membership dues.

Projects Committee: Kathy Nepote

Kathy said that the Projects Committee is getting busy in March. There are numerous pruning dates scheduled, as well as tree care at Jackson Via.

The Projects Committee has no other plans at this time for April other than the tree sale.

The Committee will discuss whether CATS wants to coordinate with the Nature Conservancy for Earth Week events.

The Committee is also going to discuss whether CATS will have an activity at the Rivanna River Fest on May 1.

Miscellaneous Business: Robin Hanes

Robin mentioned that Anne Benham requested funds to buy a book for the CATS library. Approved.

Continuing and Unfinished Business: Robin Hanes

There has been concern and discussion about what options are available if one sees a Parks and Rec employee cutting down a tree that perhaps does not need to be removed. CATS believes it is not in a position to get involved directly; however, it would be appropriate for CATS to supply contact information to concerned members or citizens.

The Board will discuss Ann Benham's request for funds to buy books for the CATS library.

The topic of Memorial Trees will be addressed again at the next Board Meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Brill