

May 2, 2022 Virtual Board Meeting via Zoom 1:00-3:15 pm EST

Attending: Robin Hanes, Barbara White, JoAnn Dalley, Michelle Cormier, Alison Brill, Tim Maywalt, Mary Spear, Penny Kaiserlian, Kathy Nepote, Libby Gretz, Anne Bentham, Martha Orton, Kenda Hall, Mark Zollinhofer, Steve Gaines

Secretary: Alison Brill

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

Charlottesville City Arborist: Steve Gaines

President Robin Hanes welcomed the new Charlottesville City Arborist, Steve Gaines.

He started his job with the City on April 11, 2022 and is still settling in. Mr. Gaines is a graduate of Virginia Tech and has a background in traditional forestry. His last position was with the Virginia Natural Heritage Project. He has experience dealing with invasive species, preserves, and prescribed burns, among other things.

In the immediate future, Mr. Gaines mentioned that 50 seedlings were being dropped off for planting the next day. If there are any further donations, they must be made right away since the season is getting too late for tree planting (email the Tree Commission if there are any donations). Tim suggested holding the seedlings until next year, if possible, at the City's nursery in Penn Park. The CATS nursery, unfortunately, probably has no additional room for more trees at this time.

When asked how CATS could work with him, Mr. Gaines indicated that he hasn't been around long enough to have a good hold on how everything fits together. (He hasn't even had time yet to look at the 162 new trees the City planted this year.) The projects that came to his mind immediately were that the City needs help filling the Gator Bags, is looking for donations of tree tubes, and perhaps could use assistance with a wildflower mapping project in Penn Park that did not have time to take off this spring. Kendra thought that perhaps Mr. Gaines could also contact Devon Floyd at the Center for Urban Habitats to pitch in with the wildflower mapping.

There was a discussion of how CATS could help fill the Gator Bags. Borrow a City water truck? Mr. Gaines said he would investigate.

As for Mr. Gaines's general feelings about volunteering, he favors focused, well-defined projects that are small-scale enough to be finished quickly, allowing people an immediate sense of accomplishment. He is open to planting smaller trees, which is something CATS can handle.

Mr. Gaines mentioned that he is concerned about some of the larger acreages in the area – that they are so overrun with invasives that they're not yet in shape to accept young trees.

Robin thanked Mr. Gaines for taking the time to come to the CATS board meeting.

Librarian's Report: Anne Benham

On April 29, Anne sent an email to all Board members regarding her progress with the possible move of the CATS library to the geology room at VDoF. She spoke to two people there, David Spears, State Geologist, and Anne Witt, another geologist. Anne B. reported that they were both open to the idea of CATS moving its library into the geology room.

The Board discussed whether the room is secure enough to prevent random people from walking off with CATS's books and whether access to the room is ample in terms of hours to be useful to members who may want to use it.

Solutions to these two concerns were discussed, and might be to purchase another cabinet that locks; having the key to the room kept at the reception area so that when Anne Witt (who is a field geologist) is out, people could get into the room; keeping a good record of who's checked out the books and when, to avoid losing track of them; or having Anne Benham available to pick up books upon request since she lives nearby. Anne B. agreed to follow up with VDoF to determine whether these or something else could be viable solutions.

The five missing books remain mysteriously gone. Robin suggested putting the titles of the missing volumes in the blast and asking people to return them if they have them, and also request donations of replacements. The list is on CATS's website's library page, too.

JoAnn, Anne, and Mark volunteered to help move the library when the time comes.

Report on Tenth and Page Project: Kendra Hall

Kendra discussed the state of CATS's and Releaf C'ville's efforts at coordination in the neighborhood, and explained how the two organizations differ. Releaf is the funding arm for Peggy VanYahres and Roxanne, not a true part of the Tree Commission. Releaf's mission is education-oriented, with CATS as the "planting arm" of Releaf. Mark pointed out that Releaf was formed to work on private properties, while CATS works on public rights-of-ways. Kendra and Toine sometimes feel as though the neighborhood has been divided into separate CATS and Releaf areas.

Nonetheless, Kendra and others pointed out the value of partnering with other organizations. Partnering almost always involves a measure of politics and friction, as Robin and others observed, but Releaf is planting trees and has given CATS funding and trees, after all. The Board generally agreed that Kendra and her team should carry on with their good work in the neighborhood.

Two caveats to this plan are: first, that CATS should be wary of including its logo and name on signs with other organizations unless those organizations' roles and missions are clearly in accord with CATS and, second, that Kendra should decline to go door-to-door as the Releaf people are doing. Kendra suggested small signs for the trees CATS has planted with basic information about the tree such as its species, the date it was planted, and the sponsor of its planting, along with the CATS logo (and a QR code to scan for more information). She showed an example of such a sign that CATS has used elsewhere -- it is inconspicuous and tasteful. As to the other concern, Kendra and her team will not be going door-to-door, but will continue their work as they have.

President's Report: Robin Hanes

Robin notified the Board that CATS has yet to hear back from SurveyMonkey regarding the request for a refund. Mary and Tim are working on this issue.

For CATS's application for a mini-grant, it is helpful for everyone to log their hours by the end of May. Robin asked everyone on the board to kindly do so.

Robin continues planning the annual picnic. She has a contact at CHO for the proposed visit to the Airport Oak prior to the picnic. In addition, Anne Mallek, who was instrumental in advocating to save the tree, has contacts at CHO and offered to help arrange a visit to the tree if she can.

As far as where to have the picnic is concerned, the problem with Chris Greene Park is that after Memorial Day there is an entry fee. Kathy, however, generously offered to pay for renting the shelter and pay for members' charges to enter the park as her 2022 donation to CATS.

The Board discussed when to have the picnic. June 15, one proposed date, is a Wednesday, which was concerning to Tim because of the members who work. It is difficult to get reservations for the shelters on weekends, but Kathy said she would look into availability on June 11, a Saturday. Alternatively, the plans for the visit to the Airport Oak and the picnic following could be later in the day on Wednesday, after people are done working.

It was suggested that Jeremy Caplin, who has been tremendously helpful with CATS's 10th and Page project, be admitted to CATS as an associate member.

Mr. Caplin is not a trained tree person, *per se*, so there was a question as to his fitness to be an associate member. The CATS Bylaws were consulted, revealing no condition that one be a trained tree person in order to be an associate member.

- **The motion was made, seconded, and passed to induct Jeremy Caplin as an Associate Member of CATS.**

Report from Fairfax Tree Stewards: Martha Orton

Martha researched how other tree steward groups handle memorial tree practices with regard to plaques or signage. She discovered that they work with park districts to place them.

Martha is assisting the Fairfax Tree Stewards to get their new training program off the ground. She wondered whether they could use CATS-produced videos. The Board discussed whether and how to do this, with concerns voiced about copyright or creative commons credit as opposed to simply sharing open-source style.

Tim suggested that CATS set up a private YouTube channel available to all tree steward groups but not the public. He asked Martha to contact the Arlington/Alexandria Tree Stewards, which has a private YouTube channel, for a name of someone there who CATS could consult.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Cormier

So far in 2022, CATS is up \$16,700, including approximately \$4,000 from the spring tree sale and \$2,300 from membership dues (including the new trainees).

Expenses to date:

(\$1,215)	Tree Sale
(1,674)	Education
(150)	Projects
(500)	Communication (ads)
(150)	Tablecloths and other various items Phyllis purchased for the tree sale (Michelle will move this line item to the tree sale)
(105)	Brochures (to be reimbursed to Barbara)

Balances as of today:

\$14,136 checking
25,000 money market

\$39,270 Total

Michelle suggested moving \$7,000 from the checking account into the money market account since the balance in the checking account need not be this high.

She faces a minor accounting headache because of a mysterious CATS credit card credit of \$2.27 that she cannot trace, but plans to go to the bank to straighten this out.

CATS has not paid rent at the VDoF since January since we are negotiating for a discount; CATS has paid VDoF \$60 for water usage in 2022.

Tree Commission Report: Mark Zollinhofer

The main excitement at the Tree Commission is that the position of Urban Forester has been filled by Steve Gaines. Although a board member expressed concern that Mr. Gaines is not specifically an urban forester by training, Mark answered that, having seen Mr. Gaines in action, his opinion is that Mr. Gaines is both great with people and very knowledgeable about urban tree issues.

Mark represented CATS at the Albemarle High School environmental fair sponsored by Releaf. He reported that the fair was well done.

Communications Committee: Penny Kaiserlian

Penny can now say with utmost assurance and understatement that the promotion for the spring tree sale was a success.

The last project was Arbor Day, with few public events in May.

Education Committee: Tim Maywalt and Mary Spear

The speaker for this month's membership meeting is Steven Matthews, who will explain the Tree Atlas.

June's main event is the annual picnic.

The Education Committee's activities for July have yet to be decided.

Tim will be putting out a notice asking members to volunteer to help with the fall 2022 training class. Notice of registration opening for the class will be out soon, as well.

Following up on the survey to the membership inquiring about interest in various workshop ideas, the Committee plans to ask people to respond personally (not anonymously) to signal which of the workshop(s) they would like to attend.

The summer tree ID class will be June 7 on Zoom at 7:00. Its corresponding tree walk at Ivy Creek is on June 11.

There will be a tree walk at the Botanic Garden on May 28.

June 12 is the date for the public-only tree walk at UVa; the members-only walk at UVa is the 19th of June.

Mary and Tim are working on criteria for becoming a tree walk leader, and aim to come up with a guide. They've booked June 18 at Ivy Creek for this workshop. To date, 17 people have expressed interest in attending.

Robin hopes that the guidelines will be structured in a way that allows individuals' personalities to come through when they lead tree walks. There will be at least some basic criteria.

Projects Committee: Kathy Nepote

Kathy noted that May is a quiet time, but people should watch TIF to see if projects get scheduled.

Projects have shifted from planting to pruning given the time of year.

In April, the Projects Committee had volunteers work with the American Chestnut Foundation.

CATS has recently received approximately 400 trees from VDoF, about half of which have been potted. Another potting party will be held to pot do the rest – watch for the date on TIF.

President Elect's Report: JoAnn Dalley

JoAnn mentioned the PBS show about the Vinegar Hill neighborhood, "Razed." She plans to tape it and invite people over for a viewing.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Brill