

Morgantown Tree Board (MTB)
Minutes, regular meeting of October 22, 2012

Present: MTB member Katherine Payne, Secretary Jon Weems, and Acting Chair Dave Barnett, and guests Ann Payne, Judith Kierig, and Alice Meehan, all three to present their ideas about making 2013 Morgantown's "Year of the Tree."

Acting Chair Dave called the meeting to order at 4:40 in City Council chambers. A quorum was not present. As a courtesy to the guests, it was decided to hear them first.

New Business

1. Year of the Tree. The guests presented ideas they have been brainstorming to enhance interest and appreciation of Morgantown's trees with a "Year of the Tree." Their goals include drawing attention to "local tree treasures," disseminating information, cultivating community awareness, and making it all fun. Possible events being considered include identification of significant trees; having a ward vs. ward competition for biggest, baddest tree; celebrating old trees via the web and an Arbor Day event; starting an annual neighborhood tree purchase/planting program beginning with SPAN, using master gardeners as tree keepers; a major tree-themed art show in October 2013; and perhaps minor "spontaneous" actions such as flash mobs, garlands/poetry/art in trees, yarn bombing, and geocaching.

The guests said they have been using the experience of Parkersburg as a model in part for what they want to do. The guests have approached scout troops, SPAN, and master gardeners with encouraging responses. They hope to obtain MTB's blessing, coordinate some events with MTB, and tap the expertise of MTB, i.e. for measurement and assessment of trees.

MTB members pointed out that MTB is concerned with city-owned trees in rights of way and in city parks. Guests were urged to use caution when dealing with trees on private property, for example by asking permission of property owners before leaving sidewalks to approach privately owned trees. MTB members expressed appreciation for the guests' efforts and the belief that some coordination could be mutually beneficial. Members of both groups expressed hope that raised tree awareness could help support the idea that Morgantown needs a city forester.

2. Incompetent tree trimmers. There was brief discussion of problems with fly-by-night "tree trimmers" active in the city. Jon reported receiving a complaint about one working near South Walnut and Cobun recently. Ann named one, active off and on in South Park and Hopecrest over the years, whose worked-on trees often die a year or two after he prunes them.

Old Business

1. MTRP. After the guests left, Dave, Katherine, and Jon discussed the MTRP situation. Katherine said the changes in addresses/trees have been reported to Jessie Wise, who is in the process of obtaining price quotes and will pass that information along to MTB. Thirty trees have been requested. Katherine mentioned three addresses on Jackson hoping for trees. Dave recalled a previous year in which tree lawns in the vicinity of Jackson or

Maple had utility lines buried underneath, making planting impossible. He was unsure of the precise location.

New Business

3. Next meeting. The next meeting was set for 4:30 November 26 in Council chambers.

Dave declared the meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.

_____ Jon Weems