

Woods Committee Minutes
Monday, April 1, 2019 – 7:30 PM
McCathran Hall Council Room

Approved May 6, 2019

Attendees: Joan Mahaffey, Larry French, Tom Land, Joli McCathran, Deb Mehlferber, Virginia Quesada, Patrice Klein (phone)

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. This will be a work session because a quorum (8) of committee members was not present.

Agenda Approval

The Agenda was approved as presented (Pat 1st/Tom 2nd).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented (Tom 1st /Deb 2nd).

Public Appearances – None

Joint Spring West Woods Clean-Up Day – April 27 – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

We will meet in the parking lot near the lake at 10:00 AM. Depending on the number of volunteers, events will include clearing trash along Kelley Park and Towne Crest boundaries and possibly family services, removing Japanese barberry with the weed wrench, pulling garlic mustard along drainage ditches from WG lane. A committee member will oversee each work group. Joan, Pat, Larry, Virginia, Tom and perhaps Deb plan to attend. WC will provide water and apples. We will post additional notices on the Yahoo site.

Joli will call the City of Gaithersburg about the Trees of Heaven near the ball field in Kelley Park. Will the City of Gaithersburg remove the trees, or may we do so before they propagate in our West Woods?

Deer Population Management Plan

- Status of Proposed Amendment to Town Ordinance

At 7:00 pm on Monday, April 8, the TC will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Town's Hunting Ordinance to permit town-authorized managed hunting under certain conditions in the East and West Woods, and possibly in the Conservation Meadow if negotiated with MD-NC Park and Planning. WC members will attend to support the change. The WC has not selected a volunteer archery team from the MC Parks Program qualified list will decide within the week. A deer management informational meeting is being planned during the summer months.

Any agreement with a volunteer archery team would require that they keep us well informed of their hunting activity, including dates and times of hunts and an ongoing tally of harvested deer. There was a suggestion to inform the Toll Brothers HOA that hunting will occur. These decisions will be postponed until the selected volunteer archery team can participate.

- Update on Exclosures

Members of the WC Work Group on Exclosures were not present. There was a reminder that we cannot hunt deer trapped inside an exclosure. Concerns raised included deer captivity, cost, maintenance, and aesthetics. Without exclosures, however, deer will continue to destroy the understory. An exclosure and control area could help document the impact of deer. Further discussion was postponed to the May or June meeting.

Annual Town Meeting – WC Accomplishments and Plans for Presentation

The annual report from the Woods Committee should include:

- Photographs of ephemerals which are re-emerging
- A summary of our three-pronged integrated approach
- The winter 'browning' of the woods because of deer over browsing up to the browse line and the reduction in the prevalence of non-native invasive plants as a result of our control efforts which the deer do not eat.
- The diminishing use of chemical herbicide treatment for NNI plants.
- The increasing use of mechanical removal of NNI plants.
- WC progress in deer population control plans
- The WC goal to encourage Town residents to walk in the woods.

Non-Native Invasive Plant Control

IPC will be working in the West and East Woods on April 3 and 4. In the West Woods, the crew will cut, paint, and spot spray wisteria near the Saybrooke boundary. In the East Woods, the crew will be spot treating wisteria and English ivy vines from last year's spring and summer treatment that were hidden in the green briar. These vines are obvious now because the green of the non-native invasive plants is easily spotted. IPC will use Rodeo and Garlon. These treatments are included in the FY 2019 Budget. The Mayor will be notified so a Grove alert can be issued. We will ask Charlie to post signs at entrances to the Woods, but IPC will also bring their own signs.

Action Items for Next Meeting

- Contact references for volunteer archery teams and research other towns' experiences
- Provide updates on status of the Ordinance amendment process
- Provide updates on East Woods exclosure site criteria and ranking
- Contact the City of Gaithersburg about the Trees of Heaven along our border with Kelley Park
- Prepare and implement the West Woods Clean-Up Day on April 27
- Prepare the WC Annual Report to the Town for approval at the May WC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM (Joli 1st/Tom 2nd)

The next meeting is scheduled on Monday, May 6, 2019 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted: Joan Mahaffey and Patrice Klein, Woods Committee Co-chairs