



## **Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission**

Municipal Association Meeting Space

May 19, 2022 May CTAC minutes

In attendance

Jim Irvin, Russ Jeter, Vi Hendley, Ian Hamilton, John Estill, Annie Scott, Shannon Kathrein, Jack McKenzie, commissioner emeritus

A quorum is present. April 21, 2022, minutes were approved.

**Undergrounding Efforts** – Jack, Russ and Jim have been drafting an ordinance for a deliberate, consistent plan for placing power lines underground allowing for shade trees to be planted (Refer to the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting for further explanation). Shannon will review the draft document as well. Mayor Rickenmenn and Council Member Joe Taylor are on record as expressing interest in undergrounding though there is no specific plan to do so. By presenting an ordinance to council CTAC hopes to begin earnest conversation with city leaders. The ordinance will address utilities, not only power companies. Scott will contact Dana Higgins about editing the department manual to include monitoring of the current Dominion contract addressing undergrounding of lines. CTAC would like to see city departments collaboratively plan on a yearly basis to prioritize projects using the Dominion undergrounding fund. A GIS mapping of Dominion power lines in the city will be helpful in determining where to begin. Undergrounding and increasing the city’s public tree canopy go hand in hand. The city is planting smaller caliper trees and are restricted by power lines when selecting the species of tree. Perhaps the city could offer tax or fee incentives to preserve grand trees within a new or existing development as well as established residential neighborhoods. Cities such as Charlotte, Charleston, Beaufort, and Forest Acres value and protect their grand canopy, as well as new plantings. Tree definitions and ordinances are listed under the Planning and Forestry & Beautification web sites. The undergrounding committee will have the draft completed by July first.

**Webpage, Bylaws/Procedures** - CTAC webpage is managed by Ashley Jenkins, Executive Assistant to the City Manager. It is not up to date; minutes are not published and provides

obsolete information. Would it require an organizational restructuring to place CTAC under Planning or Forestry Beautification? Vi will look further into how the boards, commissions and committees are organized. In the meantime, could Columbia Green temporarily host a public page for CTAC. Ian will check in with the Board of Columbia Green.

**Forestry and Landscaping** – No report

**Landscape Planning** – Improvements are planned for the Bull and Elmwood intersection. A federal grant proposal has been submitted to extend Williams Street to Gervais and under Blossom Street.

**Heat Mapping** – Mapping begins August 6<sup>th</sup>. 46 Volunteers & 23 cars receive a \$100.00 stipend to drive three times during the day with sensors to collect heat data.

**Capitol Mall Undergrounding**- The funding was not allocated for this fiscal year. The project has been expanded to South Main to Blossom. CTAC will continue to pursue this effort.

**Supreme Court Parking Lot** - Once completed the project will serve as an example of how to make the most of a previously asphalted parking lot.

**Park Planting** – All the trees planted this spring have died, been cut down or ripped up out of the ground.

**Crayton** - The project is fully funded and moving forward.

**Street Lighting** – No feedback has been received yet.