



# Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.  
Town Hall  
127 Center Street South  
Vienna VA, 22180

## Meeting Minutes - Final Tree Advocacy Committee

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Thursday, December 18, 2025

6:30 PM

Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St.  
SE

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### Roll Call

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

[25-5391](#) 11-20-25 Minutes for Approval

### REGULAR MEETING:

[25-5390](#) Tree Advocacy Committee Agenda 12-18-25

*The Tree Advocacy Committee of the Conservation and Sustainability Commission met for a regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2025, in the Board Room of the Vienna Community Center.*

*Committee Members present were Chairman Roxanne Paul, Aditi Chandra, Ken Foley, Douglas Noble, Sandy Shinn, Lea Giovenniello, Chris Bredehoeft, and John Shults. Newly appointed student member Hunter Guthrie was unable to attend. Staff members present were Town Arborist, Matt Fuller, and Director of Parks and Recreation, Leslie Herman.*

*Communications from Citizens and/or Committee Members*

*Miguel Ordonez (804 DeSale Street SW): The Conservation and Sustainability Commission (CSC) is moving forward on park proposals for the Beulah Road and Robinson properties to present to Town Council on January 5, 2026. Their concept for the Robinson property was a community memorial natural park as concept for pocket park. It was noted that house has been torn down, so it is a vacant lot with about 25 percent tree coverage. Leslie Herman shared that as part of the Parks Master Plan a supplemental study was performed with two concepts for the Robinson property, one for an active park and one for a more passive use. The Beulah Road property needs additional planning.*

*Meeting Minutes*

*The following meeting minutes were accepted into the record by the Committee with revisions as noted by Roxanne Paul:*

- CSC TAC – November 20, 2025 – Draft regular meeting minutes.

*Regular Business*

*Item No. 1 - Urban Forestry Staffing*

*Matt Fuller shared the current staffing request(s) in the Town budget development process along with shift responsibilities with staff transitions. Ideally the forestry program needs an additional urban forester/ climbing arborist and one horticulturalist (the first position is necessary) and will have one vacancy to fill. There is now a new part-time administrative position for 16 hrs./week, but the workload need is for 25 hrs./week. The part-time position (25 hrs./week) for tree planting, intern weeding, watering trees is funded from external contributions to capital program budget.*

*Tim Koski will be leaving Town staff the end of March 2026. Matt Fuller will be*

taking on some of Tim's role and some of Matt's current role will shift to the new urban forester position replacing Tim for workload balancing. The urban forester will deal with the external contracts will split time focused on production activities. Sandy Shinn asked who is inspecting development sites? Matt stated that Jeremy Edwards has been doing the site visits with Matt fills in; beginning in 2026 Matt will be walking development sites and working with Tim Koski to transition the role between January and March.

The discussion among the group noted that the Urban Forest Management Plan will help justify staffing to support the Plan. TAC support for additional forestry staffing in the 2026-2027 budget process would be helpful, but it is currently listed as an unmet need.

*Item No. 2 – Proposal on Green Streets Project*

Sandy Shinn referred the Committee to the packet Brian Land shared at the 27 February 2025 meeting as part of Green Streets project (see attachment) other jurisdiction's homeowners opt out policies for street tree planting. In summary: Arlington County – cannot opt out on planting, but homeowner has input on species; Falls Church has opt out provision though they already have 49 percent tree canopy; and in Fairfax County, Virginia Department of Transportation handles street trees.

The Town's staff has concerns about the waste of effort in planning, then last minute changes that affect location and subsequent new planting maintenance. Staff reported that over the past 2-3 years the opt out rate is 20-25 percent (in one recent location 54 spots planted of 67 programmed). John Shults asked if the Town has the data for the number of street tree spots, how many spots and opting out or utilities conflicts, and the number of extra trees that the Town could be planting? Matt Fuller responded that there are over 50 potential ideal tree planting sites in SE for fall and an additional 300-400 sites in SW that do not include programmed sidewalk projects. This does not include removal locations, or paper street and alleys.

The discussion turned to matching development sites with green streets planting locations and the Committee's perspective that with most development sites, street trees needs to be installed as part of the public right-of-way restoration.

Roxanne Paul and Ken Foley share the perspective that at the very least the TAC should be a positive in people's minds that we are planning for 10-20 years.

Consider starting first at sites that are being developed first with a planting requirement of x number of street trees added in the Town Code. John Shults asked about how the projections with opt out vs. non-opt out affect the rate of tree canopy recovery (i.e. if fewer opt out what does that do to the overall tree canopy goal in numbers?)

Sandy Shinn motioned that the following tree canopy recovery approach be added to the TAC's legislative agenda:

*To Mayor Colbert and the Members of Town Council,*

*Whereas, the Vienna tree canopy has suffered considerable tree canopy loss as indicated in the 2022 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment by Davey Tree, specifically 13 percent over the 10-year period from 2011 to 2021.*

*Whereas, Vienna continues to suffer tree canopy loss since 2021 due to continued and increased development on private property.*

*While under the good guidance of the Vienna town arborists and staff the Green Streets Project has resulted in the planting of many new street trees, we noted that there is less than the optimal number of plantings occurring because 20-25 percent of potential tree plantings are declined by a resident. The Town allows residents opt out of a street tree in front of their house even though the arborist tries to work with the resident on a mutually agreeable species to be planted. Aside from the result of fewer street trees planted, the town arborist invests time and effort determining where to plant trees and what species of trees to plant. This effort is*

wasted when a resident “vetoes” a street tree in the right-of-way in front of their home.

Be it resolved that the Mayor and Town Council remove the ability of a resident to “veto” the planting of a street tree. The town arborist shall continue to try to match a tree to the resident where there are objections but shall stay within the arborist-recommended species for street trees.

Committee members discussed the potential next steps for the actions in motion as part of the TAC’s legislative agenda for conversation with the Town Council. As a result of the discussion the reference in the proposed motion regarding who allows the opt out was changed from “The Town Council...” to “The Town...”

Motion: Shinn

Second: Foley

Carries: 8-0

Leslie Herman shared that she can add the overall TAC legislative agenda to the Town Council’s March 9, 2026 work session and that she would need advance materials by February 10, 2026. The TAC agreed that the legislative agenda would be a primary item for its January meeting.

Item No. 3 – Urban Forest Management Plan

Chris Bredehoeft has met with Leslie Herman, Jeremy Edwards, and Matt Fuller on an approach to the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP). Key questions for the TAC to consider include:

- What are the key performance indicators?
- How to monitor? Noting that there are less labor-intensive methods to acquire data, e.g., purchasing data from companies like ESRI.
- If the starting point is 30 percent, then what do we as a group propose as the goal(s) in the plan?
- This will lead to budget, resources, number of trees to plant, staffing to support the goal(s). What are the opportunities for external funding and grants?
- There can be a choice of goals for different periods of time... e.g., arrest tree canopy loss over the next 5 years and then increase tree canopy over the next 10 years.
- The plan needs to incorporate plan for maintaining new plantings and overall tree health.
- What does community outreach and engagement look like for the UFMP development and the tree program into the future?
- The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments adopted regional tree canopy goal is 50 percent.

The committee agreed to add an agenda item for the January meeting for discussion or what goals and objectives would likely have the most impact and agree on an initial set.

Item No. 4 – Proposed Newsletter

Item was postponed until a later date.

Item No. 5 – Avril Garland’s Temporary Fence Request

Item was postponed until a later date.

Item No. 6 – National Wildlife Federation Grant Application

Roxanne Paul shared that as the CSC representative she prepared and submitted a National Wildlife Federation grant for \$1 per seedling for 125 trees for spring/summer tree planting for Arbor Day.

Item No. 7 – 250 trees for Vienna250

In the October Committee meeting Roxanne Paul had shared information from Vienna250 group interested in the Town planting 250 trees for the 250th anniversary of the country’s founding. John Shults shared some of his research on how to acquire this number of trees. Fairfax County has done something similar with the

*Arbor Day Foundation to deliver trees either a) in 1 gal. pots to resident's doorsteps or b) 5 gal. pots available for pickup from a central location. The price is about \$55 ea. for either size and distribution option and about \$13,750 in total needed to fund. This would be for fall planting season. The Virginia Department of Forestry has a Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant Program that the Town could use. There was additional discussion on using a central distribution site and how it would be organized as well as how private property planted would be addressed with potential volunteers and the need for Miss Utility mark out to avoid underground utilities when planting.*

*Item No. 8 – Legislation Requests to Town Council*

*Item was postponed until a later date.*

*Other Business*

- Town Council selected a Hunter Guthrie November 10th as the second high school representation to the TAC. He is a senior at James Madison H.S.*
- Lea Giovenniello shared slides of Dominion Energy's power line clearing along the boundary of Northside Park. The TAC raised concerns about where the location of the property line versus any easement that Dominion has for the extent of clearing. There was debris remaining in the photos as well. Leslie Herman shared the response letter from Dominion to the Town's concerns. The Town was going to identify if there were boundary issues relative to the clearing action. There was also discussion of potential restoration grant(s).*

*The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.*

*THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6341, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.*