

Beautification Commission Meeting Notes 10.9.25

Attendees: Shelu Patel, Alisa Wong, Russ Bailey, Dereth Bush, Eleanor Quigley, Ken Krupa, Laura Norfolk, Camden Weber, Tiffany Hamdi, Oscar Mendoza

1. Welcome and Announcements

- **[Eleanor T.]** welcomed new Commission members
- **[Eleanor T.]** announced:
 - Elections for Chair and Vice Chair will take place next month.
 - A vote will be held next month to decide whether to hold a December meeting.

2. Fort Ward Arborist Memorial Plaque

- There is an existing arborist memorial at Fort Ward. A new plaque will be installed to honor the city's first arborist and list all city arborists.
- The city will complete some landscaping before installing the plaque.
- A formal ceremony will be scheduled for the spring.
- Eleanor and Russ will accompany RPCA staff to determine the placement of the plaque and a dogwood tree.
- **[Russ]** Fort Ward has announced plans to renovate the playground, moving it to the top of the hill near the parking lot. The old playground site by the stream will be replanted with trees.

3. Native Plant Assessment at Gateways

- **[Oscar]** reported that staff will assess native plants at gateway locations to evaluate current conditions before fall planting. This will inform plant selection.

4. ABC Awards Ceremony

Refer to the "ABC Award Ceremony Run of Show" for a detailed timeline. Key points:

- **Commissioners** arrive: between 5:30–6:00 PM.
- **Setup** begins at 6:00 PM.
- Award winners will be invited to sit by category in the front; Commissioners are asked to sit toward the back.
- **Speakers:**
 - Opening remarks by Eleanor T.
 - Remarks from Mayor Gaskins and Vice Mayor Bagley
 - Liz will present awards

- Three winners per category will be invited to speak (no additional formal speakers).
- **Photos:**
 - 7:00 PM – Photos with residential award winners
 - End of program – Group photos with remaining award winners
- **Additional items:**
 - Light refreshments and exhibits during opening reception
 - **Dress rehearsal:** Monday, October 14 at 4:00 PM

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from the September 2025 meeting were approved.

6. Proposal: Biannual Awards Ceremony

- Proposal to make the awards ceremony biannual while continuing to issue awards annually.
 - This would allow the Commission more flexibility and activities during off-years.
 - Year 1 could focus on the east side of the city; Year 2 on the west.

7. Subcommittee Updates

Education Subcommittee

- Eleanor T. is working with the city to update the website with current award winners.

Advocacy Subcommittee

- **[Russ]** reported on a letter to **Nathan Imm** requesting clarification on:
 - Tree stipulations when a building permit is submitted.
 - How the city evaluates existing trees during development.
 - A motion was passed to send the letter.
- **Tree Planting Event (Saturday, Oct. 11)**
 - **Location:** Lynbrook Apartments, 5580 Ascott Ct.
 - **Time:** 9:30–11:30 AM
 - Led by adult supervisors and tree stewards — a good opportunity to learn tree planting.
 - The site, part of the 1950s Hamlets complex, is the first planting in our Tree Equity Program to ensure we have good tree coverage in lower income areas, particularly in the West End where there are heat islands due to large parking lots.

- This marks the first time the city is providing large canopy trees to private properties, beginning with Holmes Run Area.
- **Conservation & Habitat Proposals**
 - **[Alisa]** shared a proposal to create a conservation area by converting turf grass to habitat.
 - She met with two natural resource managers, city employees, and Kurt Moser from the Four Mile Run Conservancy.
 - City point of contact has notified neighborhood associations.
 - **[Eleanor Q]** noted that Alisa is exploring how to extend Four Mile Run Park initiatives to nearby neighborhoods.
 - **[Alisa]** highlighted the fragmented natural spaces in the Lynnhaven neighborhood and suggested using connected corridors like Potomac Yard Park as a model.
 - Education Subcommittee will create a post about Potomac Yard North.
 - Emphasis on connecting public and private land through green corridors.
 - **[Eleanor T]** referenced the Bird Alliance's "Stretch Your Parks" restoration project.
 - A **motion passed** to pilot a project connecting parks.
- **Stormwater and Flood Mitigation**
 - The Commission met with the city's Stormwater staff and Flood Mitigation Advisory Board (John Hill).
 - Encouraged to promote the city's mitigation projects.
 - Homeowners can receive tax credits for stormwater infrastructure.
 - Grants available: Up to \$25,000 for HOAs and **\$5,000** for individuals.
 - The Commission will write to the city requesting information on stormwater construction plans along Commonwealth Ave.
- **"Leave the Leaves" Campaign**
 - **[Eleanor T.]** hopes to pilot the campaign in select parks.
 - **[Alisa]** suggested:
 - Incorporating demonstration gardens and ARMAN projects.
 - Adding signage to explain intentional leaf retention.
 - **[Laura]** noted that **ALXNow** recently published an article about the campaign.
- **Centennial Tree Project**
 - **[Ken]** attended the Del Ray Artisans monthly meeting.
 - Discussed the upcoming **250th USA celebration** and spoke with a woodcarving artist about possible commemorative project to be sited near Centennial Tree

- Eleanor T represents ABC as part of a city group encouraging patriotic gardens of red, white & blue native plants in 2026. We're setting a challenge to get 250 residents to take up a patch of grass and plant natives.