

Tree Canopy Committee Meeting
May 13, 2025

Attendees: David Atton, Mitch Bass, Steve Siemborski, Nat Smith, Sandra Turner, Peter Wiest

Volunteer: Dana Fries

Audience: Sharon Bodker, Lucy Chamberlain, David Bourne

Welcome – Mitch

Minutes Approval – Minutes from the April meeting were not available. Steve will submit at the June meeting.

Timeline of Work with BMW and Progress to Date - There was a question posed by David about how we know the work is being done. What is the verification? Mitch indicated that BMW uses GPS software to guide their work and track it on a map. Mitch has seen it. We are confident that they are working the property areas in their contract.

During this first half of Year One of the contract, $\frac{3}{4}$ of work on the pilot properties is completed. BMW started on February 25, 2025.

In August or thereabout we will take drone and ground photographs again of the four properties.

PlanITGeo – Data was just recently received from the company. Our sales representative left the company, and our account was not re-assigned. Finally, Erick has been trained on the software. But we need someone else to be trained. If not one of the Tree Committee members, then another volunteer.

Erick will be asked to speak to PlanITGeo about the flyer they produced. The information about the Village needs to be verified. They found an increase in the Village's tree canopy, which contradicts the Cuyahoga County data.

There was a discussion about the accuracy of urban canopy viewers...LIDAR vs. satellite imagery. Further, what if good observed tree canopy density was really invasives? The best verification is ground level data ... tree inventory. This is 'ground truthing'.

Nat said that the GMLC had a biologist do an assessment of trees on its properties. If those properties qualified for EQIP funding, perhaps adjacent properties could be invited to participate with GMLC as the operator. But the question is whether USDA is cutting back funding. We should know by September when the new budget goes into effect.

Dana Fries – Dana introduced herself. Recent graduate of Syracuse University in 2024. Experience with writing, grant applications, removal of invasives.

David and wife Sharon Bodker will apply for a grant from the Cuyahoga County Soil and Water District for funding for a consultant to do the first component of a village tree plan. There is \$950,000 in funding to be allocated this year. The Committee had some questions. Does the grantee select the consultant? Does the County have a list of approved consultants? Do their areas of expertise align with our environment? Ours is not an urban tree canopy. What will the plan cost? How much is a grantee expected to contribute?

David will share draft with committee for input before completion. The deadline for submission is Friday, June 6. Letters of support will be required from groups like CRWP, Metroparks, GMLC, WRLC, ODNR, Holden Gardens and Woodlands, the Gates Mills Garden Club, etc.

Previously Hunting Valley got money for trees in the northeast corner of Fairmount and Shaker Blvd.

Nat – federal grants are also options for the Tree Canopy Committee. He is pursuing these options through EQIP for 2026 if the money is renewed by the federal government.

Sandra – Debriefed “Caring for Your Woods”, the seminar by Holden Gardens and Woodlands. There were 65 attendees, of which 36 were from Gates Mills. We have the contact information for those individuals. There were 18 woodland professionals available to interact with residents from throughout Cuyahoga County.

Feedback from our Tree Canopy Committee members in attendance was very good. Resources were plentiful. It would be recommended to include a case example, following the process from the identification of invasives through their removal several years later. Include photos of the most common invasives in the slide deck. Ask participants for feedback.

Letter from resident Lucy Chamberlain was distributed. Her questions and comments concerned the clarification of boundaries of the pilot sites, the treatment methods and strategy, the plans post-treatment, and resident education. She was thanked for her observations.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes taken by Sandra Turner