

Committee on Trees, Parks, and Environment Annual Report, CY 2023

The Committee on Trees, Parks, and Environment (“The Committee”) is instructed by the Town Code, Section 16-102, to assist Council and Mayor with preparation or update of an Annual Town Tree Plan regarding care, preservation, pruning, etc. of trees on public land and right of ways. Below are listed the committee’s regular and annual activities, as well as special initiatives undertaken in 2023, followed by TPE’s goals for CY 2024, metrics for 2023, and TPE membership.

Mission and Organization

The Committee’s primary function is to educate University Park residents on the value and benefits that trees, plants, and healthy ecosystems provide.

At the close of 2023, The Committee was comprised of nine members and Council Liaison Laurie Morrissey (Ward 3). Chris Aubry has served as Chair since 2013.

Since May, 2013, the Committee has conducted regular, monthly meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, 7:00-8:30 PM, formerly at Town Hall. Since April of 2020, The Committee has met by Zoom and/or in person, currently at members’ homes that are accessible to all.

Regularly Occurring Activities

- On most weeks, a TPE member will post a tree-centric educational piece to the Town listserv, readily identified by the subject line *UNIVERSITY PARK IS TREEMENDOUS*.
- Approximately 10 months every year, the Committee sponsors a two-hour activity in which volunteers remove ivy from the trunks of public trees. The event, known as the “Ivy League,” is advertised in the newsletter and via the Town listserv. Incentives have been offered for participation.
- Most issues of the newsletter include an article focusing on the care and maintenance of trees or tree advocacy.

Bi-Annual Activities

- The Chair and other members meet with Director of Public Works twice a year, typically in spring and late summer, to strategize logistics for plantings, discuss ways to improve their interactions, and update each other on developments.

Annual/Ongoing Initiatives

- Since 2013, the Committee has selected sites and provided specific recommendations for concentrated plantings of street trees, replacing the previous model of responding to individual homeowners’ requests, in an effort to increase efficiencies in maintenance. This annual initiative is a tri-lateral partnership between the Committee, Public Works, and for one community planting - the volunteer residents.
- The Committee’s Ward Stewards program (launched 2017) assigns members to specific wards to monitor and record trees that are in distress or dead. The reports are consolidated and provided to Director DPW.
- Committee members are committed to attending UPES’s annual Arbor Day Ceremony.
- The Committee encourages residents to participate in the Annual Stream Cleanup.

- The Committee’s reflector at TreeComm@UPMD.org is utilized by residents to communicate questions, concerns, and suggestions to the Committee.

New Initiatives undertaken/achieved in 2023

- Bioretention Pond at Woodberry & College Heights. In the fall of 2022, a TPE subcommittee was formed with members of TPE and proximate neighbors. TPE provided recommendations throughout the design and build phases, in the process saving several large shade trees immediately adjacent to the pond, reducing extensive grading near the principal homeowner’s house, and advocating for adjustments to overflow mechanics. TPE was granted permission to lead the selection of plants and their placement within the pond. TPE oversaw ordering, delivery, and storage of plants. TPE and volunteers planted 1,160 plants in the pond on October 7-8.
- Participated at Sustainability Committee’s Meadow Day on July 8.
- Drafted and distributed guidance/best practices for mitigation crape myrtle bark scale and issued an alert for spotted lantern fly.
- Advocated for greater currency and consistency for TPE’s content on the Town’s website.
- Provided in-person and online tree and environment related consultations.

Specific Goals for 2024

- Maintenance of Woodberry/College Heights Bioretention pond – weeding, pruning, mulching, monitoring watering needs.
- Advocating that the town use only undyed mulch on all rights of way.
- Advertising/Enforcement/Fine Tuning of the Town tree ordinance.
- Continuation of regular programming, i.e. annual tree planting (NE quadrant of Ward 6), monthly Ivy League, newsletter articles, etc.
- Educational Activities, which will include
 - Collaborating with Sustainability Committee on Pollinator Meadow activities
 - Continued promotion and expansion of Shade Tree Reimbursement Program.
- Building/strengthening alliances with mission-similar entities, including UP’s Sustainability Committee, Anacostia Watershed Society, and University of Maryland Extension.
- Transition to GPS data collection for all Town trees, via “Healthy Trees/Healthy Cities.”
- Sustain regular monitoring and reporting of street tree health through Ward Stewards program. Further explore development of an “Adopt a Tree” program where homeowner agrees to refill a Tree gator.

TPE CY 2023 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES/METRICS

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE(S)	VOLUNTEERS/ ATTENDEES	2023 HOURS	RESULTS
Survey, Annual Contractor Planting	All Wards	7/2 & 7/31/23	4 committee members	20	33 street trees selected for planting by UP’s Contractor in Wards 1 & 2
Redress Mulching	Wards 1 & 2	Late October – mid November	1 committee member	9	Corrected grade on 33 improperly mulched trees planted by contractor
Survey, Ward Stewards	All Wards	By 08/01/23	7 committee members	30	Town wide Inventory of distressed/dead trees updated. Log sheets collated; provided to DPW.
Annual Tree Planting	Bioretention Pond	10/7 & 10/8/23	32, over 2 days. 14 attended both days	226	Planted 1,126 plants: 40 shrubs, 112 container plants, and 976 plugs
Ivy League	Throughout UP	2 nd Saturdays	10, several regularly	49	Removed ivy from ~ 50+ trees on public land.
UP IS “TREMENDOUS”	UP’s listserv	Most Mondays	10 Committee members	44	Building coalition of tree enthusiasts – generating eco-centric dialogue.
			<i>NON-ADMIN TOTAL</i>	378	
Administration (Chair)	Desk/Computer	~4 hours wkly	1	140	Position papers, research, correspondence, outreach, minutes, agenda, reports, etc.
Regular Meeting Attendance	Zoom/hybrid	2 nd Wednesdays 9 months	average 7 members	126	Cohesion, Goal setting, achievement
Bio Retention Pond Subcommittee	Members’ houses, Zoom	4 formal meetings, multiple ad hoc	4 Committee members +1	80	Conferring with DPW, Planning, Ordering & storing of plants, site plan generation, coordination of volunteers
			<i>ADMIN TOTAL</i>	346	
			<i>GRAND TOTAL</i>	724	

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bio-retention pond – significant design input and 1,126 plants selected, sited, and planted.
- 21 trees were planted by residents using the town’s Tree Reimbursement funding.
- Town-wide inventory of distressed/dead public trees updated.
- 378 volunteer hours logged. (Exclusive of meetings and administrative tasks.)

**UNIVERSITY PARK, MD
COMMITTEE FOR TREES, PARKS, & ENVIRONMENT (TPE)
CURRENT MEMBERS, 05/31/2024**

LastName	FirstName	Street Address	Date since active
Aubry	Christopher	4207 Tuckerman St	2011, Chair since 2013
Alvarez	Beth	4103 Van Buren St	2013
Alvarez	Roy	4103 Van Buren	2012 (Council Liaison 2012-5/2018)
Burghardt	Karin	4124 Woodberry St	July, 2021
Erickson	Eric	4317 Sheridan	2016
Jasinski	Matthew	4206 Van Buren	March, 2021
Morrissey	Laurie	6607 44th Ave	2018 (Council Liaison)
Sondak	Karen	6805 Pineway	2009
Thompson	Joe	4403 Sheridan	2018
Young	Tim	4317 Sheridan	2016