City of Martinsville Tree Board
Meeting Minutes
Date: 01/02/2025]
Time: 10-11AM
Location: 55W Church St. Martinsville, VA 24112., Room 208

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order with an introduction of the agenda, focusing on Martinsville's tree canopy data and strategic planning.

II. Tree Canopy Maps and Data Overview

An overview of the city's tree canopy maps and land cover analysis was presented, supported by funding from the USDA Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Forestry. Alignment of the tree canopy strategy with the City's Comprehensive Plan was emphasized.

III. Tree Canopy Distribution and Planting Potential

- Martinsville currently maintains a 55% tree canopy cover, one of the highest for a city.
- Tree canopy is unevenly distributed, with central areas having greater coverage.
- Approximately 2,000 parcels have less than 10% tree canopy coverage, with potential for a 60% increase.
- Public parcels could support between 2 to 34 new trees each.
- Over 16,000 trees could potentially be planted in low-coverage areas such as Northside.

IV. Neighborhood-Level and Street-Specific Analysis

- Notable disparities exist in tree canopy between neighborhoods, with Forest Park having more coverage than Uptown.
- Uptown could accommodate a 15–17% increase in tree canopy.
- The average canopy cover along streets is 20%, with Memorial Boulevard and Darlene Avenue identified as priority sites for expansion.
- Tree planting along streets offers benefits such as traffic calming and commercial district enhancement.

V. Public Property Tree Potential

- City parks show high existing canopy, but additional capacity remains:
    - Chatham Heights Park could support nearly 120 new trees.
    - Hooker Field has the lowest canopy coverage among parks.
    - Approximately 670 trees could be planted across parkland (excluding areas like ball fields and cemeteries).

- Martinsville High School has capacity for over 1,500 new trees.

VI. Benefits of Tree Canopy

- Trees remove air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter. Martinsville's trees absorb about 28,000 pounds of nitrogen annually.
- Approximately 20,000 metric tons of carbon are sequestered each year.
- The i-Tree tool was introduced as a method to estimate property-specific benefits like energy savings and water retention.

VII. Stormwater Management and Environmental Impact

- Tree canopy intercepts up to 12% of stormwater during a 10-year storm and 20% annually.
- Tree cover can delay stormwater runoff by up to 3.7 hours.
- A national study shows an 8:1 cost savings ratio when using green infrastructure versus traditional stormwater systems.

VIII. Urban Wood and Carbon Storage

- Martinsville was encouraged to explore Urban Wood programs to repurpose downed trees for carbon storage and wood product use.
- Strategies promoting "right tree, right place" were stressed as key to effective and sustainable management.

IX. Challenges and Strategic Considerations

- The group discussed the need to balance development and environmental goals.
- Strategic development in areas with better soil drainage was recommended.
- Local resources, such as the Virginia Department of Forestry's Urban Wood network, were noted for managing downed trees.

X. Action Items

1. Explore partnerships with local schools to plant trees on school grounds, involving student participation.
2. Share detailed tree canopy maps and analysis with the client.
3. Investigate flooding concerns in the College Street/Bridge Street area and assess how tree planting may provide mitigation.
4. Schedule a follow-up meeting with the Green Infrastructure Center.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting concluded with a shared understanding of the importance of targeted tree planting and long-term integration into city planning efforts.

A follow-up meeting is being considered to review agenda items that could not be covered in today's session. The group also briefly discussed a potential tree planting partnership with the Youth Advisory Committee of Martinsv