



Tree Board 2023 Annual Report

City of Lake Forest Park

Introduction

This report summarizes the work conducted by the Tree Board for calendar year 2023 as well as the current board term status.

- The Lake Forest Park Tree Board advises the City Council, with a primary responsibility for making policy and regulatory recommendations concerning the management of trees and forest canopy in Lake Forest Park.
- Additionally, the Tree Board holds the responsibility of providing outreach and education to the community on tree-related issues, including, but not limited to, organizing public events involving trees.

Tree Board Members during 2023*

Commissioner	Term Expires	Status
Richard G. Olmstead (^)	2/28/26	Active
Doug Sprugel (^^)	2/28/24	Active
Mark Phillips	2/28/26	Active
Stacey Spain	2/28/25	Active
Victoria Kutasz	2/28/25	Active
Marty Byrne	2/28/26	Active
Sandra LeVar	2/28/25	Active
Julia Bent		Term ended 2023
Mandee Parker	2/28/25	Deceased

^ Chair; ^^ Vice Chair

* Due to resignations in January-February of 2024 (Byrne, LeVar), there are two vacant board positions as of February, 2024.

Planning Staff & Council Liaison 2023

Staff Member	Title
Elizabeth Talavera	Assistant Planner (current)
Riley Bushnell	Assistant Planner (resigned August 2023)
Hannah Swanson	City Arborist (resigned July 2023)
	City Arborist position currently vacant

City Council Liaison	Title
Larry Goldman	Councilmember

Work Plan Accomplishments

Recommendations to revise the Lake Forest Park Tree Code

The Tree Board anticipated making recommendations pertaining to the species and sizes of trees covered by the “exceptional tree” clause in the Code during 2023, but these recommendations were tabled until revised data on tree size distributions are available from the ongoing tree inventory. The report from the tree inventory was released in January and the Tree Board will analyze the tree size distributions to make recommendations during 2024. The Tree Board also began work on revising the LFP Approved Tree List that is designed to assist homeowners and the City Arborist in selecting suitable trees for use as replacement trees to fulfill obligations as part of the tree removal permit process. The revised list will include a list of prohibited trees based on the King County Noxious Weed list of invasive and potentially invasive tree species.

Lake Forest Park Tree Inventory

The original LFP Tree Inventory was completed in 2010 and scheduled to be repeated in 10 years. The second inventory was delayed by the pandemic, but was completed in 2023. After a call for proposals and review by the City with the participation of Tree Board member, Doug Sprugel, DCG Watershed was selected to conduct the inventory. The inventory was begun in 2022 and completed in summer of 2023. Because a significant number of property owners denied permission to have the original plots on their property remeasured, DCG Watershed needed to identify new plots to ensure sufficient data is collected to achieve statistical significance for the inventory. A draft of their report was delivered to the Tree Board in November and a special Board meeting was held on November 29 to go over the report with DCG Watershed personnel attending by Zoom. The Board provided both verbal and written feedback, which was incorporated into the final draft that was presented to the City Council in December.

Public Outreach and Education on Trees

- Arbor Day tree planting. A site in Horizon View Park was selected for a ceremonial tree planting on Arbor Day (April 15). A Japanese snowbell (*Styrax japonicus*) was donated by Tree Board Chair Richard Olmstead for planting. The event was attended by Mayor Johnson, several City Councilors, all Tree Board members, and several community members.
- LFP Green Fair. Four Tree Board members staffed a table in the Town Center Commons for the annual Green Fair on Saturday, April 29. They distributed flyers and informational brochures and answered questions from the public.
- Tree Board member Sandra LeVar provided leadership in organizing and promoting outreach activities for the Tree Board in collaboration with Board member Marty Byrne, including a proposed tiered approach to public outreach. She developed a media calendar that include LFP News (digital and print) as well as social network posts. Plans included educational content for each month by quarter. Informational content was included in the LFP eNews, including new content and some repeat content. The Tree Board additionally began an outline of proposal for updates to the three webpages maintained by the tree board on the LFP city website. Inventory of existing educational content and links was initiated in 2023 but formal change plan will not be presented until 2024. Board member LeVar prepared a draft series of modular informational units suitable for use in social

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media, print flyers, and other media formats. These will be finalized in 2024 and will be distributed in appropriate ways with assistance from City staff.

- Tree Board member Marty Byrne developed a plan for an ivy removal demonstration to help educate LFP residents about how to remove ivy from trees effectively. The plan includes both a live demonstration and a video recording to make available through the LFP City website to reach additional residents who are interested in ivy removal on their property. Time required to obtain a permit from the City meant that the event will be pushed back to 2024.

Tree Planting and Maintenance Events

In the spring of 2020, King County Waterworks awarded a \$45,000 grant to the Lake Forest Park Tree Board for invasive plant removal and restoration of a quarter mile length of the riparian area bordering McAleer Creek. A contract was awarded in 2020 to Applied Ecology for invasive plant removal and native species replanting. Between August 2020 and February 2022, all of the invasive removals were completed and a large selection of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants were planted. However, a number of trees were severely damaged by mountain beaver and deer browsing. So, Tree Board member Julia Bent, who led this project, coordinated volunteer efforts by Board members and LFP Stewardship Foundation members to construct wire cages to protect the remaining trees. In spring of 2023, the remaining funds from the initial King County Waterworks grant were used to purchase additional trees (primarily Sitka spruce, which are more resistant to browsing), shrubs, and herbs to replace plants that didn't survive or were damaged by browsing. An extension of the contract to Applied Ecology supported this supplemental planting. This project is now completed, although funds for follow-up weed removal may be warranted to support the initial investment.

Tree Board column in the LFP eNews.

The Tree Board continued its semi-regular column in the monthly LFP eNews in 2023 with essays on subjects pertaining to appreciation and management of trees. This will be a continuing feature of the Tree Board outreach effort outlined above.

Illustrated Tree Walks in Lake Forest Park (David Hepp), the Tree Board is continuing efforts to update the popular pamphlet "Tree Walks of Lake Forest Park." The original pamphlet was prepared by David Hepp and The Urban Forest Task Force and published in 2008. Many changes to the trees in the neighborhoods visited by the tree walks have occurred in the last 13 years. To enhance its usefulness and aesthetics, as well as to accommodate residents who want to make use of their smart phone to access the tree walks, the text has been updated to reflect changes in the neighborhood trees and to include color photos to help users identify the trees described in the guide. Tree Walk #3 – Horizon View was completed in 2020 and Tree Walk #2 – Sheridan Neighborhoods was completed in 2022 and are available for download through the City website (<https://www.cityoflfp.gov/240/Tree-Walks-of-Lake-Forest-Park>) and photography for Tree Walk #1 – Town Center, Lyon Creek, Waterfront Park is complete and the downloadable pdf should be available in early 2024. Tree Board member Richard Olmstead has provided leadership on this.