

TOWN OF MONTREAT
TREE BOARD

Minutes March 11, 2025 meeting
Montreat Town Hall

The meeting was called to order by chair, Ed Kramer, at 9:05 am. Present were: Ed Kramer, Tyler Smith, Mason Blake, George Sawyer, Elizabeth Hamilton and Ann Vinson. Absent: Brad Hestir.

The Chair welcomed everyone. A moment of silence followed. The first order of business was the swearing in of the 2 new board members, Elizabeth Hamilton and Ann Vinson, by Town Manager, Savannah Parish.

The next order of business was the adoption of the proposed agenda. On a motion by Ann Vinson and a 2nd by Elizabeth Hamilton, the agenda was unanimously adopted as presented. The minutes were unanimously adopted as read on a motion by Ann Vinson and a 2nd by Elizabeth Hamilton.

Old Business:

George Sawyer reported on the Fire Situation in Montreat. The Black Mountain Fire Chief will present a brief report to the Council during the March 13 Town Council Meeting. The Tree Board recommended that we share concerns with the MRA and check with Buncombe County regarding fire bans. It was strongly recommended that the town and MRA post signage regarding the fire ban around town.

Ed reported that the next meeting of the Swannanoa Valley Tree Alliance will be held on April 26.

Ed also reported on contacts he has made in our Outreach to help residents who are unable to clean their property of brush and residual storm damage. He asked that if anyone wishes to volunteer with this effort, to please contact him. Mason Blake then listened to comments regarding the request for transfer of Rights of Way for proposed improvements to the Richard Hitch property. It was the consensus of the Board that there we had major concerns about the ROW request for the heavily treed portion of the property. Mason reported that the item was on the agenda for the upcoming Town Council meeting to see if public hearings for discussion of the issue should be scheduled. Board members are encouraged to attend the meeting and

New Business:

Elizabeth Hamilton gave a most informative update to the Hemlock restoration project. [SEE ATTACHED].

Ann Vinson presented some preliminary ideas for a fall Arbor Day Celebration. It was also discussed to make available a low key information celebration during the week of April 25, the official National Arbor Day and North Carolina Arbor Day. This would hopefully include information about the Hemlock Restoration project.

There was no Chestnut update at this time.

George Sawyer updated the Board on Landcare. George confirmed there will be no Native Plant Sale this year, but encouraged to the Board to do some informational opportunities for the public. George will work with Ed and Ann on how best to present. Tyler suggested that we contact the Adult Summer Club to see about the Board doing a program on Helene recovery and what residents can do. It was felt that this would be a better way to reach more property owners than a brief presentation at the Cottagers' Annual Meeting in July.

Tyler hopes to work with the Town's Public Works staff to assess an inventory of the tree situation in Montreat. At its January meeting, the Board reported how valuable this proactive approach was prior to Helene's visit. Other observations included continued cleaning. Much has been accomplished but there is much more to do. Barry reported that the stream cleanup/remediation team from the state is currently working in Old Fort. The next stop will be Black Mountain and then Montreat. There is no time schedule as yet as to when they will be in Montreat.

Maintenance Department Update:

In addition to reporting on the Stream cleanup team, Barry reported that the town's chipper was destroyed during a recent brush pick-up. A steel bar that had been placed in a brush pile destroyed the chipper. Fortunately, Drew and his crew were not injured. In the meantime, please continue to place brush in bags. Regular brush pick-up will resume once the chipper has been replaced.

Public Comment:

Joe Standaert commented that several of the Treasure Tree Plaques have been destroyed, and can they be brought to the attention of the SVTA. How to replace.

There being no further comments or business, the meeting was

a second by Elizabeth Hamilton.
Respectfully submitted,
Ann Vinson, Secretary Pro-Tem