

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
TREE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011**

Members Present: Chair. Jim Nau, Bill Bangs, Valerie Blaine, Ralph Grathoff, Chris Scott, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers, Pam Otto, Phil Zavitz

Others Present: Ben Deutsch, Peter Suhr, Isabel Soderlind, Nicole Wang

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair. Jim Nau at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Blaine was not present at roll call.

3. Introductions of Visitors and Comments and Concerns:

Introduction of Nicole Wang, City of St. Charles Administrative Assistant. Ms. Wang was recently hired and currently working with the Public Services team, Peter Suhr and Ben Deutsch at the Public Works Facility.

Omnibus Vote

4. Recommend approval of September 2011 Minutes

Motion by Ziegler, second by Bangs to accept the September 14, 2011 Minutes as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Vice Chair. Myers, Otto, Zavitz, Blaine- Motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion on City Forestry/Ordinance Plan

Chair. Nau and Commissioner Grathoff have not been able to schedule a meeting with Ben Deutsch and Peter Suhr to discuss the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Chair. Nau indicated he would set up a meeting after December 15 when Peter Grathoff would be available. An introductory plan will be presented to Council once the outline and structure to the plan is

developed. The committee felt Council should be informed of the Commission's initiative from the onset of the plan.

B. Plaque for Peter Grathoff

The plaque has been installed.

C. Volcano Mulching

No new updates. At the previous meeting, it was suggested that educating efforts continue by: (1) including it in the Urban Forestry Plan under "education"; (2) including this information at the Arbor Day festivities through flyers, a demonstration and/or speaker topic; (3) sending formal letters to local landscaping companies informing them "volcano" mulching is against the code and requesting the correct technique be implemented, and (4) educating City Council.

Commissioner Bangs suggested the St. Charles Park District and School District 303 should be added to the educating efforts.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Ben Deutsch has confirmed another 134 trees with EAB. Between the last two months, there have been approximately 163 trees proposed for removal. Due to weather conditions and the removal of several large trees, the removal process has been slow going. The larger trees require bigger equipment and more manpower.

B. Fall Planting.

Fall planting has begun. Approximately 430 trees of various species have been planted throughout the city. The Eastside is completed. The Northwest quadrant will be completed tomorrow. The Southwest quadrant will follow and will take two to three days to complete. Planting will then move towards the Far West, which is the area west of Randall Road. Staff will then revisit all the areas and make any additional adjustments.

The remaining trees will be planted around April or May of next year. With the exception of the CMD area, every tree removed has been replanted; residential areas taking priority. The City has been fortunate to have the funds to replant a majority of the trees. The budget however will be depleted towards the end of this fiscal year therefore the department will be making recommendations and requesting guidance from Council sometime in the near future.

EAB awareness has increased. The number of trees dying or dead has increased the number calls from residents requesting the removal. The current removal list already expands into next February. There will be approximately 13 ash trees removed along Fox Glen Drive. The majority of ash trees on Gray Street, 12th Street, Charleston, and Westfield will be removed by the end of this winter. Come February, Mr. Deutsch will be better able to assess the damage. He anticipates the Cambridge East area will be hit very hard next summer.

As a reminder, those trees marked with a purple dot indicate the tree is infested with EAB. A pink dot indicates the tree will be removed in the near future. Trees that are being treated have been tagged by the City; those being treated look better than others.

Chair. Nau received information in the mail from Beaver Creek Nurseries in Wisconsin. The information included suggestions of hardy trees that may be appropriate for the City of St. Charles. Chair. Nau will respond to the vendor and forward the information for Ben Deutsch to review.

Commissioner Ziegler mentioned a recent EAB article in the Daily Herald. The article was regarding the success residents are having with chemical treatments in Arlington Heights. The residents have formed a group called "Coalition for Urban Ash Conservation". This group is researching a variety of treatments that will be resistant to the borer.

C. News from Public Works:

The Morton Arboretum, ISA and the City of St. Charles Public Works department is sponsoring a Wood Utilization Seminar at the Public Works Facility on Thursday, November 10. Approximately thirty people will be attending.

Ash trees infected by EAB can be utilized for mulch. It is required that the logs go through the chipper and then the tub grinder, thus the EAB will not survive.

D. Langum Woods Clean Up.

The clean up effort on October 28 went well and was very effective. The students and volunteers were from Wredling School, with approximately two groups of 70 students. Each group worked for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. The Park District naturalist has been a great asset to the program. They are knowledgeable, organized, and work well with the students. The group brings their own tools and safety equipment. All required insurance and liability paperwork was completed and in order to meet the City's requirements.

The path on the south end of the woods is becoming more defined. Mr. Deutsch recommended clean up efforts focus on the south end of the woods again next spring before proceeding north.

Ben Deutsch indicated the grass is starting to grow on the pathway, hopefully omitting the need to lay down chips. If the current volunteer program continues, Mr. Deutsch anticipates this project lasting approximately 10 years. The committee will walk through the area again next spring and barricade any areas that may be potentially hazardous.

The next clean up should be scheduled for the middle of March, depending on the school district's schedule and curriculum. This time the students will be cleaning up brush.

6:56 Commissioner Blaine arrived to the meeting.

E. Next Year's Joint Meeting/Langum Woods:

Ben suggested having next year's joint meeting at Langum Woods. Chair. Nau recommended conducting a joint meet in the spring. Mr. Deutsch indicated the woods will need one more clean up before a "walk-thru" is scheduled.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Vice-Chair. Myers not present.

B. Publicity Committee

Commissioner Blaine stated that several initiatives have been discussed. She requested this item be tabled until the next meeting when Vice-Chair. Myers would be present.

C. Arbor Day Committee

Chair. Nau summarized the following:

Donation of Perennials - Midwest Ground Covers: Chair. Nau.

Midwest Ground Covers will donate perennials as they have in past years.

Speaker - John Duerr: Chair. Nau

Commissioner Zavitz made initial contact with John Duerr from the Kane County Forest Preserve. Chair. Nau will follow up with Mr. Duerr to confirm.

Reservation of Lincoln Park: Chair. Nau

Chair. Nau will reserve Lincoln Park through the Park District.

Contests - Photography & Tree Story PR Articles: Commissioner Blaine

Publicity articles for the City's Website, The Den and press releases should be submitted and approved by the January 11 meeting. The contest is open to any age group. Isabel Soderlind will email past articles describing the event & contest to Commissioner Blaine and Chair. Nau. Commissioner Blaine will submit the revised articles to Isabel Soderlind and/or Nicole Wang when they are approved.

Art Activity for the Children for Ages 3 to 12 years of age: Commissioner Blaine

Discussion regarding children's activity. While a line drawing is not a very creative activity for children, it does get them engaged in Arbor Day. The activity also appears to draw attention to the event. In previous years, the mayor has signed each drawing, which is returned via mail to each child with a free Colonial Sundae gift certificate enclosed.

The committee discussed a more interactive activity for the children the day of the event, e.g., treasure or seed scavenger hunt. Commissioner Blaine will email Chair. Nau with some suggestions.

If a drawing is considered:

1. Drawing needs to be posted on the Website and distributed to the Park District. These should be submitted to Isabel by mid February.
2. Colonial Sundae gift certificate prizes will need to be picked up.

Day of the Event:

Presentation of Colors:

Honor Guard and Pack 113 will be engaged throughout the event.

Tree Demonstration – Graff Tree Care: Commissioner Scott

Graff Tree Care will conduct a demonstration, e.g., climbing techniques, aerial rescue, etc. Commissioner Scott is considering having a children and adult saddles available to climb and repel down approximately 10' feet. Issues with liability may be a concern; Commissioner Scott will contact and discuss this with the St. Charles Park District

Entertainment: Chair. Nau

Rick Weals will provide musical entertainment.

Set up and Food: Public Works Department

Public Works will order cookies for the event, set up of chairs, podium, and speaker system. They will also set up EAB sample demonstration.

Rent the Tent: Chair. Nau

Chair. Nau will rent the tent in January.

8. Communications

A. Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports

Motion by Bill Bang, second by Valerie Blaine to accept the September and October 2011 Communications-Electric Division/Tree Activity Report as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Myers, Otto, Zavitz Motion carried.

Commissioner Bangs asked if the City did any type of publicity regarding EAB, including the City's initiatives i.e., removal and replanting of trees. He added the community's awareness should be increased. Mr. Suhr indicated an update is presented at every monthly Council meeting. The press publishes various articles regarding updates and progress throughout the year. The City's Den newsletter does publish an EAB update once or twice a year.

9. Comments

A. Commissioners

Blaine: Glad to hear the Langum Park clean up went well.

Ziegeler: Welcome to Nicole.

Scott: Pleased to see to see the Langum Woods project moving forward. It is a pleasure to see the community being involved and taking ownership.

Bangs: Complimented Commissioner Blaine on her recent buckthorn article published in the Daily Herald.

Nau: Commissioner Nau reminded the commissioners of the "Open Meeting's Act", which also includes any written communication e.g. group emails. When voicing concerns, commissioners should contact Vice Chair. Myers and/or Chair. Nau. A copy can be sent to Peter Suhr and/or Ben Deutsch. More information regarding the "Open Meetings Act" can be found on the City's website: <http://stcharlesil.gov/government/docs/manual-advisory-boards-and-commissions.pdf>. Mr. Suhr also reminded the committee that they currently have nine members, a quorum is five members, and therefore a quorum majority is three members. Any meeting above a quorum majority constitutes an open meeting and needs to be publicized.

B. Staff

None

10. Adjournment

Motion by Valerie Blaine second by Ron Ziegler to adjourn meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Myers, Otto, Zavitz - Motion carried.

/ims