

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
March 8, 2018**

Members Present: Chair. Ralph Grathoff, Valerie Blaine, Kathy Brens, Jon Duerr, Raymond Hauser, Pam Otto, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Suzi Myers, Caroline Wilfong

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Jeremy Craft, Marcelline D'Argento, AJ Reineking

Visitors Present: Heather Goudreau, Lee Haggas, Marcia Koenen, Loren Nagy

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:02 p.m.

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

Ms. Koenen invited all present to walk with America in Bloom [AIB] in the City's St. Patrick's Day parade on March 10, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. There will be an AIB banner carried in the parade to increase awareness and promote AIB, and seed packets will also be distributed along the parade route.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the January 25, 2018 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Blaine, second by Comm. Hauser to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.

4. Natural Resources Commission

Mr. Adesso informed the Commissioners the amendments to Code were approved on March 5, 2018 by City Council, and the Tree Commission is now officially the Natural Resources Commission. Mr. Adesso extended contragulations on behalf of Mayor Rogina on the transition from the Tree Commission to the Natural Resources Commission.

Mr. Adesso asked the Commissioners whose terms expire on April 30, 2018 to please contact the Mayor to inform him of their interest in either reappointment or expiration of their terms [i.e. Comms. Blaine, Grathoff, Myers, Otto and Ziegler]. Additionally, there are two new vacant seats on the NRC, and anyone who would like to join the NRC should also contact the Mayor to express their interest. Nominations and appointments will made be at the first City Council meeting in May.

5. Arbor Day

Chair. Grathoff reviewed the Arbor Day checklist and requested updates on the planning for the event. Comm. Otto reported the Wild Rose School Woods Club students are working with one of the art teachers, and their participation will include artwork and a presentation. Mr. Craft confirmed Pederson Company will donate two trees which will be planted on Arbor Day at the school.

Chair. Grathoff asked if there would be a recipient of the Arbor Day Stewardship Award this year, and asked the Commissioners to offer suggestions at the next NRC meeting in April.

Ms. Koenen informed the Commission one of AIB's evaluation items is urban forestry, and AIB's participation in Arbor Day supports the work of both AIB and the NRC. Ms. Koenen, on behalf of AIB, proposed having a table at the event with tree care information, including proper mulching to prevent mechanical damage and moisture protection, and the importance of watering parkway trees. AIB would also distribute approximately twenty different variety of annual plant seeds. AIB chose seeds to distribute as they are a different type of plant material than the perennials donated by Midwest Groundcovers. The seeds were donated to AIB by Ball Seed Company. Ms. Koenen requested comments from the Commissioners on AIB's Arbor Day participation. The Commissioners supported AIB's participation in the City's Arbor Day event.

Motion by Comm. Duerr to invite to AIB participate in Arbor Day with the NRC, second by Comm. Brens. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:18 p.m.

6. New Business

Comm. Blaine introduced the topic of light pollution and the possible role of the NRC in its reduction. Comm. Blaine informed the Commission she would like to share a presentation/powerpoint at the April NRC meeting on the impact of light pollution on wildlife, plants and humans, and the solution for its reduction. Comm. Duerr asked who at the City was responsible for the street lighting program. Mr. Reineking responded Tom Bruhl is the Electric Services Manager. Mr. Adesso stated he would provide Mr. Bruhl with any information and/or requests from the NRC.

Mr. Adesso reported the City has a phased plan to replace all streetlights with LED lights. The LEDs have a lower kelvin rating/number which reduces the blue light emitted. The LEDs will appear to be similar to the sodium-based lights residents are accustomed to seeing, but not as yellow in appearance. Mr. Adesso will find out the locations where new LED lights are already installed and asked the Commissioners if they would provide feedback. Comm. Otto asked if street light fixtures are being changed to accommodate the LEDs and reduce light bleed-up. Mr. Adesso explained that fixtures are being changed, and noted most City street lights are "cobra-head" form which can be adjusted to direct the casting pattern of light. The City's new replacement streetlights will have a narrow casting pattern. A streetlight was replaced at the corner of South Third Street and Gray Street recently, if the Commissioners are interested in viewing it as well as the new streetlights on Bricher Road. Comm. Blaine stated this topic is appropriate for the NRC and may include phasing in dark sky friendly fixtures, reducing glare, light trespass, etc. Mr. Adesso stated any feedback from the NRC would be provided to Mr. Bruhl.

Comm. Duerr commented that during a recent visit to Tucson, Arizona, he noticed many neighborhoods had no streetlights at all. He noted how well Tucson had incorporated low light production within the city.

Ms. Goudreau informed the Commission of Earth Hour which will be observed on March 24, 2018 from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. in all time zones. Everyone worldwide is encouraged to participate by turning off all electricity for one hour. Comm. Brens noted it would be like a traveling blackout as electricity was turned off all around the world raising environmental awareness.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

None.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up

Comm. Otto reported there is a firm date for clean-up on Sunday, April 8, 2018 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Approximately twenty-five students will participate from the Alliance and Key Clubs at St. Charles East High School. Work includes refuse clean-up and trail chipping.

9. Communications – Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for January and February 2018

Motion by Comm. Brens to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Hauser. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:34 p.m.

10. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Brens inquired when the new parkway tree would be planted in front of her home. Mr. Craft informed her the tree should be planted during the last week in March or the first week in April. Comm. Brens also invited all present to attend a fund raising event for the St. Charles History Museum at the Arcada on March 22, 2018.

Ms. Koenen requested that information regarding the AIB table at Arbor Day be placed on the program. Ms. D'Argento will include the information mentioned above in Item 5.

Comm. Duerr noted the Police Department construction project and other City projects that involve stormwater management may be appropriate for NRC involvement. Mr. Adesso stated the NRC can always advise staff, who would then take information back to the engineers and architects for various projects within the City. Comm. Duerr recalled the site of the new Police Department was once a swamp area and asked if detention/retention would be included in the project. Mr. Adesso confirmed detention is a requirement of the project and other stormwater management techniques may also be incorporated. The site was the location of the old headwaters of State Street Creek. Mr. Adesso will keep the NRC updated on the project. Comm. Otto commented that approximately ten years ago a dead mink was found in the parking lot at the site of the new Police Station, an indication that the area may have previously been a mink habitat.

Comm. Duerr inquired about the City's projects on the east side of the river. Mr. Adesso explained the City applied for a 319 Grant for portions of the 7th Avenue Creek project. The primary project for next year is culvert repair/replacement for the 7th Avenue Creek. The culverts are in poor condition with a lot of siltation; erosion control will also be part of the project. Mr. Reineking reported seven houses will also be demolished by the City as part of the overall project. The City's website project page has information about the project, which includes a naturalized area.

Comm. Hauser shared information from an article in Smithsonian entitled *Do Trees Talk to Each Other?* The article was written by a German author and forester. Comm. Hauser recommended that Commissioners read the article and reach their own conclusions.

B. City Staff

None.

C. Visitors

None.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Ziegler to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Duerr. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:50 p.m.