

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
January 25, 2018
(Rescheduled from January 11, 2018)

Members Present: Chair. Ralph Grathoff, Valerie Blaine, Kathy Brens, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Pam Otto, Caroline Wilfong, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Jon Duerr

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

Visitors Present: 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

Mr. Nagy re-introduced himself to all present. Ms. Koenen introduced herself as a member of the St. Charles committee for America in Bloom.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the November 9, 2017 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Brens to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:03 p.m.

4. Old Business

None.

5. Natural Resources Commission

Mr. Adesso informed the Commission that staff updated the Definitions section of the Code [Section 12.20.010] and made some other minor language updates. Chair. Grathoff asked if there were any comments; Comm. Blaine stated the document was very good. No revisions or additions were requested by the Commissioners.

Mr. Adesso will forward the draft of the amended Code to the Mayor's Office and the City's legal counsel for review. If any substantive changes are made by legal counsel or the Mayor's Office, the document will come back to the Tree Commission for review. If no further changes are made by legal counsel or the Mayor's Office, the proposed Code amendments will be placed on the agenda for review at the Committee level, possibly in February. Mr. Adesso explained staff will provide a recommendation of approval of the Code amendments to the City's Government Services Committee [GSC]. If the GSC has no changes and there is vote of approval, the Code amendments will then go to City Council for final approval. Chair. Grathoff confirmed that upon City Council approval, the amended Code would become law; Mr. Adesso replied affirmatively. The Commissioners had no additional comments regarding the Tree Commission's transition to a Natural Resources Commission.

If the amended Code is on the GSC agenda, staff will inform the Commissioners via email approximately one week prior to the GSC meeting of Monday, February 26, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. if anyone would like to attend the meeting.

6. Arbor Day

Mr. Craft reported this is the City's 20th year as a Tree City USA community; perhaps this could be part of the Arbor Day theme this year. The meeting continued with a review of the Arbor Day checklist provided by staff. Comm. Otto reported she has been in contact with Laura McKinsey, one of the teachers at Wildrose Elementary School, who leads Wildrose Woods Club for 3rd and 4th grade students. This is a popular club that may be interested in participating in the City's Arbor Day celebration. Comm. Otto will be in touch with Ms. McKinsey in the next few weeks. Comm. Brens suggested the students might do an oral reading of a poem by Joyce Kilmer or the book *The Giving Tree*. Comm. Myers noted the National Arbor Day Foundation website has a lot of free information / ideas on celebrating Arbor Day with children, and also has educational materials for teachers. Comm. Brens offered to assist the teacher and students at Wildrose Elementary School with the Arbor Day celebration if they decide to participate.

Ms. Koenen informed the Commission that America in Bloom [AIB] would like to support and participate in the Arbor Day celebration [Comm. Otto and Mr. Adesso are also involved with AIB]. Mr. Adesso noted the AIB committee discussed interfacing with the Tree Commission and possibly including the red geraniums during the Arbor Day celebration [red geraniums are the national and City flower of AIB]. Perhaps red geraniums could be offered as part of the give-away on Arbor Day. Ms. Koenen noted the City's urban forestry and Park District programs are part of AIB's evaluation criteria, and Arbor Day may be an opportunity to also get the community involved with AIB. Chair. Grathoff stated Shady Hill Gardens may be able to supply red geraniums for Arbor Day give-aways. Ms. Koenen noted that red geraniums are the AIB symbol flower / logo, but all flowers and plantings are part of AIB.

Mr. Adesso informed the Commission that during a prior concert in one of the City parks AIB representatives were in attendance and participated in a lightbulb give-away along with an electric utility that supplied the lightbulbs. It was a successful opportunity to publicize AIB, and handing out lightbulbs was a good way for AIB volunteers to start a conversation with concert attendees. Arbor Day would provide a similar venue for AIB to reach out to the community.

Ms. D'Argento explained there are a series of Arbor Day related press releases and newsletter articles issued by Public Works in February, March and April, and perhaps information on AIB can be included in these communications.

Chair. Grathoff suggested having a speaker on Arbor Day if there is no school program.

Comm. Wilfong suggested a possible 20 year retrospective. Perhaps Comm. Myers would consider doing a retrospective. Comm. Blaine suggested discussing how the City has grown with regard to people population, tree population, etc. Comm. Myers suggested discussing the NRC transition, and possibly inviting all available former Tree Commissioners to attend the celebration.

Mr. Reineking asked if the Commissions have a preference on which school the tree will be planted. Comm. Otto suggested Wildrose Elementary School.

7. New Business

Mr. Reineking alerted Comms. Blaine, Grathoff, Myers, Otto and Ziegler that the Mayor's Office would be sending letters regarding their commission expirations on April 30, 2018. Mr. Adesso explained that in the meantime, Commissioners can contact Mayor Rogina directly if they wish to express their interest in continuing with the Tree Commission / NRC.

Comm. Myers reported that she attended an environmental conference and shared literature from the Morton Arboretum regarding options for replacing invasive plants. The information was provided by Beth Corrigan, the liaison between the cities and the Arboretum.

Mr. Craft noted Beth Corrigan was involved in the grant awarded to the City for its tree inventory project. He reported Graf Tree Care has finished phases one and two [of four phases] of the inventory project. On May 1, 2018 phase three will begin; the project should be completed by spring 2019. The City's Treekeeper database will be updated with the inventory information. Comm. Hauser asked about the measurements of all City trees and how the information will be maintained. Mr. Nagy asked how the City's tree inventory is managed. Mr. Craft responded to both questions explaining that City staff will enter the data and actively maintain the inventory information.

8. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

None.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up

Comm. Otto has been in contact with an ecology club teacher at St Charles East High School. Comm. Brens will be at the high school tomorrow [Friday 01/26/18] and will follow up with the teacher. The president of FONA Corp. is involved with a boys baseball team that is interested in a volunteer project. Comm. Brens suggested an Eagle Scout project might be possible; Comm. Otto is hoping to get a scout troop involved. Comm. Otto would like to have clean-up completed by March before wildflowers start to grow. Mr. Reineking noted Langum Park has seven total acres.

Mr. Craft reported during the week before Christmas Public Services crews took advantage of the mild weather to clean up hangers and began re-establishing the path through Langum Woods. Comm. Otto noted there is a lot of Black Cherry trees growing and poison ivy in the woods.

9. Communications – Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for November and December 2017

Motion by Comm. Brens to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Otto. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:43 p.m.

10. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Ziegler will be speaking at the Heritage Center at the end of February regarding Colonel Baker. Comm. Ziegler and his family knew Colonel Baker, and 2018 is the centennial year of the inheritance received by Colonel Baker and Dellora Angell from Dellora Baker Gates. Colonel Baker generously made many contributions and donations to the St. Charles community that some may not be aware of including Hotel Baker and Baker Community Center. Comm. Ziegler stated for the record how much he, his family and the entire community benefited from the contributions of Colonel Baker.

Comm. Otto noted the wife of former Comm. Phil Zavitz recently passed away. Comm. Otto also reported the Park District will be trying mini goats for grazing at Boy Scout Island. The New York Park District also uses goats to graze. The goats may provide labor savings for the Park District.

Comm. Blaine invited all present to maple sugaring on March 3rd and 4th at Creekbend Nature Center.

B. City Staff

Mr. Reineking requested that the Commissioners review their contact information and note preferred telephone numbers.

C. Visitors

10. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Myers to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Ziegler. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:55 p.m.