

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
MARCH 10, 2016**

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

Members Absent:

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Jeremy Craft, AJ Reineking, Isabel Soderlind

Visitors Present:

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of New Commissioner

Kathy Brens was appointed to the Tree Commission (hereafter referred to as the “Commission”) at the City Council meeting on January 19, 2016. Kathy has been a long time resident of St. Charles, worked as a teacher in District 303 and a volunteer serving as chair of the City’s Youth Commission for many years. She is currently on Board of the St. Charles History Museum and has served as President for the past two years.

Comm. Brens mentioned Comm. Hauser had contacted her and had informed her of the vacancy on the Tree Commission. She indicated that she has a passion for plants, landscaping and a love for trees so she volunteered to submit her application to the Commission.

Jeremy Craft introduced himself. Mr. Craft has been working for the City for the last three years and was recently promoted to Public Works Division Manager. His responsibilities include supervising and managing the Public Services Arborist Team. He will continue to attend these Tree Commission meetings moving forward instead of Tony Bellafiore.

The Tree Commissioners then introduced themselves.

3. Roll Call

4. Introductions of Visitors: None

5. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the October 14, 2015 Tri-Cities Joint Tree Commission meeting. Motion made by Comm. Duerr second by Comm. Myers to accept and place the minutes on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Otto

- Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.

Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the January 14, 2016 Tree Commission meeting. Motion made by Comm. Blaine second by Comm. Ziegler to accept and place the minutes on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Otto

- Motion carried at 7:07 p.m.

7:08 p.m. Comm. Otto walked into the meeting

6. Old Business

A. Update on the Urban Forestry Management Plan

Mr. Reineking, Public Works Manager, indicated that he had not received any edits from the Tree Commissioners regarding the Urban Forestry Management Plan (hereafter referred to as the “UFMP”) since the last meeting. Jeremy Craft, Public Works Division Manager responsible for the Urban Forestry group, is currently reviewing the document and making modifications as needed.

Next steps:

- Commissioners Blaine and Brens will review and “word-smith” the document jointly.
- Graf Tree Care will present the final document to the Tree Commissioners at either the April or May Tree Commission meeting.
- Mr. Reineking will present the finalized document to Council at the May or June Government Services Committee meeting.

Mr. Reineking reminded everyone to respond directly to him with any edits to the document.

B. Reorganization of the Tree Commission into a Natural Resources Commission

Mr. Adesso presented the concept of reorganizing this committee to a Natural Resources Commission (NRC) at the February 22 Government Services Committee (GSC) meeting. Per Chris Adesso, the presentation went well; the initiative was well received by the Aldermen. While the GSC Committee had questions regarding the project and focus of the NRC, they felt it was a sound initiative. They did request this new Natural Resources Commission continue to function as an ‘advisory’ board and not offer jurisdictional recommendations.

Mr. Adesso recommended the following items as next steps moving forward.

- Write a mission statement with the scope of projects the NRC would focus on.
- Consider increasing the number of commissioners by just two or three if needed.
- Consider making the transition to NRC after Arbor Day and the approval of the UFMP document.
- Sections of the City’s Codebook 12.20.040 & 12.20.050 “Tree Commission” will need to be revised and presented to Council for approval.

7. New Business

A. News and Concerns from Public Works: None

B. Spring Planting Update: No updates discussed at this time.

C. Discussion of Outlot B at Woods of Fox Glen Subdivision

Mr. AJ Reineking indicated he was recently informed of some tree damaged at the Woods of Fox Glen subdivision. The Public Services Arborist team inspected the area and after noting the damage requested Graf Tree Care to assess the damage and cost to the area. A full length detailed report was submitted and distributed to the Tree Commissioners for their review.

This parcel of land known as “Outlot B” was donated to the City many years ago by the developer of the Woods of Fox Glen subdivision. The twenty acres of wooded land is land-locked, runs along a creek and is located within a stormwater basin area. The land does not have road access; it is not “parkway” property. The trees on this parcel of land were girdled, burned and cut down to stumps. City officials called the Police Department to investigate and it appears the suspect is a Village of Wayne resident living nearby. The individual never called the City for information or requested permission to conduct the work. According to report from Graf Tree Care, “this may have been an attempt at an Ecological Restoration, but 98 trees were removed without the City’s consent, girdled and left standing

for dead. Several brush piles were also present on the site, as well as burn scars from previous brush fires.”

This property is utilized by local area residents; children play in the area and residents walk their dogs. The remaining trees will be taken down due to the fact that they are a safety hazard to those that may be in the area. According to Graf’s report and the City’s Municipal Code, punishment for these offenses includes up to \$750 per offense (\$73,500) with an estimated tree replacement cost of \$20,877 for damages totaling \$94,377. The issue will be taken to City Council to determine if the City should take legal action. AJ Reineking requested the Tree Commissioners for their guidance.

The Commissioners had varying responses with the following comments:

- This was vandalism of City property.
- Habitat restoration is becoming very popular by Ecologists and Certified Arborists.
- Burning and over-girdling of trees put the neighborhood and community in danger.
- The land was not a “natural prairie” but a semi-forest with Sugar Maples, Boxelders, Black-Cherry, American Elm, Shellbark Hickory trees.
- Now that it has happened, let’s restore it.
- How much would it cost to restore it back to its vegetative state and stabilize the soil?
- Woods of Fox Glen HOA has ruled that any tree that is removed on private property is replaced one for one.
- The Commission should be protecting these areas.
- The intent of this individual may not have been malicious. It was an attempt at Ecological Restoration (unpermitted) by removing low to medium quality trees and girdling trees for wildlife habitat, but the execution was poor.
- If a decision is made to file charges, the fine should cover the expense of restoring and making this area safe again.

8. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee: None

B. Publicity Committee: None

C. Langum Park Clean Up: None

D. Arbor Day:

The Committee reviewed the 2016 Arbor Day Checklist:

Arbor Day is scheduled for 4:00 p.m., Friday, April 29, 2016.
 Lincoln Park will be reserved from 2:00 to 6:00 PM.

Item To Accomplish	Delegated To	Completed	Comments/Notes
Reserve Lincoln Park	Ms. Soderlind	Confirmed	Returned Executed Contract / No Charge
Renting of the Tent	Ms. Soderlind	Confirmed	Returned Executed Contract / Received invoice
Presentation of Colors:	Comm. Wilfong	Confirmed	Contact: Cub Scout Pack 113, Lincoln School Contacts: Andie Romano (Cub Master) & Erik Rudd (Committee Chair for the Pack) erikdrud@gmail.com andie.romano@gmail.com
Contact Midwest Ground Covers for donation of perennials	Chair. Grathoff	Confirmed	Chair. Grathoff will pick up on Arbor Day

Contact Featured Speaker	N/A	N/A	None
Contact Ms. Tieche at Munhall School	Comm. Otto Comm. Myers	Will be meeting with Mrs. Tieche next week	Will confirm the topic of the presentation and speaker system needs and sound system needs Program ideas: Urban Forest, Tree Diversity Will pick out a small token of our appreciation for Mrs. Tieche
Order Speaker system	T. Bellafiore J. Craft & PW Staff	Will order the same sound system requirements as last year.	Coordinate with Public Services (RJ Recording)
Tree Demonstration	Comm. Grathoff	Confirmed	Contact Chris Scott
Entertainment/Music	Comm. Myers	Will contact Rick Weals for a back up	Rick Weals not available, but will recommend a representative
Prepare Programs and Invitations	Ms. Soderlind		
Purchase Cookies	Ms. Soderlind		Ms. Soderlind will pick up the day of the event.
Set up of Tables/Chairs/Podium	T. Bellafiore J. Craft & PW Staff		
Tribute to Trees – Update Website/Den Article	Ms. Soderlind		Comm. Blaine & Myers suggested sending it to Kane County Connects
Interactive Children’s Activity	Comm. Otto Comm. Blaine Comm. Myers		Commissioners Will have activities lined up by next month
Tree Commission/Arbor Day Promotion & Planting of Tree on Arbor Day	Comm. Wilfong	Confirmed	Fox Ridge and John Baird has been contacted and interested in receiving a tree. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comm. Wilfong will coordinate tree related activities throughout the week at the school. Commissioners Myers, Otto, Blaine, Wilfong will participate. 2. Comm. Wilfong also mentioned the ability to participate in the City’s “Tribute to Trees” to the Fox Ridge School representatives. 3. Comm. Wilfong will also reach out to Munhall and Davis to continue to build the relationship with those schools.
Purchase of Trees (2) “Arbor Day Tree” donation Raffle Tree	J. Craft PW Arborist Team	Confirmed the purchase of a Zelkova Serrata	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up crew or vendor to plant “Arbor Day” tree – Musashino Zelkova 2. Have Raffle tree on site at Lincoln Park

**ARBOR DAY TREE RELATED ACTIVITIES & PLANTING OF TREE
FOX RIDGE SCHOOL
1905 E. Tyler Road**

**2016 TREE OF THE YEAR: Zelkova Serrata ‘Musashino’
Announced by the Society of Municipal Arborists**

TITLE	CONTACT NAME	PHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
District 303 Facilities Superintendent	John Baird	331-228-5197	john.baird@d303.org
Principal at Fox Ridge School	Amy Stuckey	331-228-2400	Amy.Stuckey@d303.org
Admin Assistant at Fox Ridge School	Jackie Stopka	331-228-2400	Jacqueline.Stopka@d303.org
Time of Planting	Not confirmed as of yet		
Location	Fox Ridge School		
Planting Site			

9. Communications

Electric Division Tree Activity Reports

Motion to accept and place on file the Public Services and Electric Services Tree Activity Reports for January and February of 2016. Motion made by Comm. Myers second by Comm. Blaine to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None
- Motion carried at 8:04 p.m.

10. Additional Items – Comments

A. Commissioners:

Comm. Hauser mentioned that diversification is a great goal, but he requested a status update the oak population in town. Mr. Craft mentioned the City was planting a wide variety of oaks in this year’s planting program.

Comm. Duerr: None

Comm. Brens stated she was delighted to be on the Tree Commission. She mentioned that she was currently limiting her volunteering efforts, but from tonight’s meeting felt she would enjoy participating on the Commission. She also wanted to praise the City staff for coming out and picking up a large parkway tree branch on Sunday afternoon.

Comm. Brens mentioned there will be a “[40s Night at the Arcada Theatre](#)” event on Thursday, March 31 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. The proceeds of the event will be going towards the St. Charles Museum. Check with the Museum or call Comm. Brens if you are interested in attending.

Comm. Blaine encouraged everyone to come out to the Maple Sugaring event March 12 and 13.

Comm. Otto welcomed Jeremy Craft and Comm. Brens to the Tree Commission. She also warned everyone to know the Muskrats were on the move; watch out for them.

Comm. Wilfong welcomed Comm. Brens.

Comm. Ziegler welcomed Comm. Brens.

Chair. Grathoff: None

Comm. Myers mentioned the Farm Bureau was hosting the "[Touch a Tractor](#)" event on April 8, 9 and 10. The event is free and she would have baby chicks there.

B. City Staff:

AJ Reineking: None

Chris Adesso: None

Jeremy Craft mentioned he attended the Morton Arboretum Lunch & Learn at Hickory Knolls. He found the seminar very informative with the emphasis on tree diversity.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Brens to adjourn meeting, second by Comm. Duerr

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None

- Motion carried at 8:12 p.m.

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