

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
April 13, 2017**

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

Members Absent: Kathy Brens, Ron Ziegler

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

Visitors Present: Heather Goudreau

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the March 9, 2017 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Hauser to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:04 p.m.

3. Old Business

A. Arbor Day Updates

i. Davis Primary School Volunteers

Comm. Myers provided the dates and times volunteers were requested to read and talk with the students about trees and Arbor Day. Comms. Blaine and Duerr will volunteer.

ii. Arbor Day Updates

Ms. D'Argento reported pending items on the Arbor Day checklist have been completed; some items require completion the day of the event. The agenda for the event has been finalized and is basically the same as in the past.

Mr. Craft informed the Commissioners a tree will be planted at Davis Primary School at 9:00 a.m. on Arbor Day. The planting site has been identified and necessary arrangements have been made with the teachers/students, school maintenance personnel and Public Works staff.

Mr. Reineking reported Public Works received an offer from a marketing organization to participate in Arbor Day and promote the movie Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 2. After some discussion, the Commissioners and staff determined this offer would be declined as a movie promotion may not be appropriate for the City's Arbor Day celebration or for the ages of the elementary school students who will be present.

Some of the Commissioners may have artwork to display at Lincoln Park.

Chair. Grathoff provided an update on the St. Charles Rotary Club tree planting volunteers. There may be planting sites in the forest preserves where the volunteers can plant trees. Comm. Duerr will follow-up with Angelo Bravos of the Rotary Club.

The Commissioners and City staff thanked Comm. Otto for suggesting this year's Arbor Day theme: *Diversity in the Urban Forest.*

4. New Business

A. News and Concerns from Public Works

Mr. Reineking and Mr. Craft reported spring planting is underway; 170 trees of various species will be planted in the parkways.

Mr. Reineking reported the Urban Forestry Management Plan [Plan] was presented to the City's Government Services Committee [GSC] last month and was very well received. Members of the GSC wanted to know how the Plan would be made available to the community. Mr. Reineking will coordinate with the City's Communications Manager to publicize the Plan through the City's website, blog and via social media. Also, Graf Tree Care has been sharing the Plan with other municipalities. Chair. Grathoff and Comm. Myers noted members of the GSC had a lot of good questions and were very positive about the Plan. Chair. Grathoff thanked everyone who worked on the Plan, and now that the Plan has been completed the Tree Commission can begin its transition to the Natural Resources Committee. Mr. Reineking stated the staff will be prepared to outline next steps at the May meeting.

Mr. Adesso informed the Commission there is a lot of energy behind the concept of natural resources and mentioned the interest in and wide support of America in Bloom. The concept of sustainable culture is a commonality among various committees within the City, and is of interest to City's elected officials.

B. News of Concerns from Tree Commission

Comm. Hauser provided additional information regarding the lawsuit filed against the City of Geneva which was previously discussed at the March Tree Commission meeting. The lawsuit was filed by an insurance company and involved a distressed tree that was apparently brought to Geneva's attention by a resident/the insured party. Geneva indicated the resident's request to remove the tree was never received. A limb from the tree fell causing a fire that cost the insurance company a significant amount to resolve. Geneva cited the Illinois Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act [745 ILCS 10] which protects "local public entities and public employees from liability arising from the operation of government." The matter was settled and the lawsuit was dismissed with prejudice.

Mr. Reineking noted the Urban Forest Management Plan contains a risk assessment policy that is already in use. Within a three to four year period, 100% of the City's trees will have been assessed. Comm. Myers inquired as to how the City would handle changes in risk resulting from storms, for example. Mr. Reineking responded there is some reliance on residents to report storm damage. Mr. Craft explained City crews go out after storms to assess the City's trees for damage.

Chair. Grathoff requested an update regarding the City-owned property located in the Woods of Fox Glen/Outlot B. Mr. Adesso reported, as a result of the adjudication process, fines were levied against the individual involved. The fines amounted to thousands of dollars.

Comm. Duerr inquired about America in Bloom and the connection to the Natural Resources Committee. Comm. Otto explained there are environmental and sustainability components to America in Bloom's focus. America in Bloom competitors are evaluated on various criteria including urban forestry, environmental efforts and heritage preservation. Comm. Otto noted the City's participation in America in Bloom has led to environmental-related improvements such as installing recycling containers downtown and offering un-rented gardening plots for planting, for example.

Mr. Adesso added that the concepts of community involvement, volunteering and sustainability are promoted by America in Bloom. Through its involvement with America in Bloom, Public Works has opportunities to highlight some of its efforts in preserving and enhancing City-owned natural areas. During this year's America in Bloom event, Public Works will discuss a recently completed sustainability project involving an old eroded stormwater basin that was regraded and stabilized using all native plants. Mr. Adesso also described a proposed volunteer project with the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency [IMEA] in partnership with America in Bloom. The proposal is to distribute 5,000 LED lightbulbs in the community promoting the message of sustainability.

5. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

None

B. Langum Park Clean-Up

Comm. Otto reported local high school students may participate during the 2017/2018 school year.

6. Communications - Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports January-February 2017

Motion by Comm. Blaine to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Hauser. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. Adesso noted the tree activity reports are approved and placed on record for the purpose of the City's Tree City USA certification.

7. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Wilfong commented on a video she viewed regarding Cincinnati's EAB tree removals and the threat to Maple trees from Asian long-horn beetles. Comm. Duerr noted that approximately 15 years ago the City of Chicago clear-cut many trees in an effort to quarantine the Asian long-horn beetles.

Comm. Otto updated the Commissioners on the City's progress regarding an ordinance pertaining to honey bee-keeping as it relates to public safety. The ordinance will be passed at an upcoming City Council meeting.

Comm. Blaine informed the Commissioners the forest preserve is having its first Monarch and Milkweed Festival in June, which might be of interest to the Natural Resources Committee. Also there is a lot of participation in the Kane County Big Tree Program, and several champion trees are located in St. Charles.

B. City Staff

None

C. Visitors

None

9. Adjournment

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