

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING  
LOREN NAGY, CHAIRMAN  
OCTOBER 12, 2023**

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**2. Roll Call**

**Commissioners Present:** Angela Churchill, Tom Galante, Heather Goudreau, Lee Haggas, Ryan Johnson, Jeff Mengler, Laura Miller Hill, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto, Meagan Provencher.

**Absent: Student Member:** Deetya Solanki.

**City Staff Present:** AJ Reineking.

**Visitors Present:** Joseph Cannizzaro.

**3. Minutes Review and Approval.**

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the September 14, 2023 Natural Resources Commission [NRC] meeting. Motion by Comm. Galante, second by Comm. Johnson to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:03 p.m.

**4. Articles for The Den Newsletter.**

Articles for the remainder of 2023 have been assigned. Comm. Myers will have a sign-up sheet for 2024 articles at the next NRC meeting.

**5. Location of Arbor Day 2024 Celebration.**

As previously discussed at a prior NRC meeting, Comm. Otto recommended combining the City of St. Charles [City] annual Arbor Day celebration with the customary school tree planting ceremony, rather than having two separate events. The Arbor Day event would be held as part of the tree planting ceremony at one of the local schools, as previously done at St. Charles East High School during the pandemic. All present agreed with this recommendation. City staff will notify the Park District that facilities will not be needed for 2024. The location of the Arbor Day event and tree planting will be coordinated with the St. Charles School District.

**6. Committee Reports.**

**A. Education and Outreach.**

**1. Bird City Application Update.**

Comm. Myers reported the Bird City application is in progress.

**2. Scarecrow / Dim the Lights.**

Comm. Myers noted the NRC's scarecrow promoting awareness of World Migratory Bird Day [WMBD] and Dark Skies was displayed during the City's Scarecrow Weekend event. Comm. Myers thanked City staff for their assistance in assembling and transporting the scarecrow.

Additionally, Comm. Myers noted Saturday, October 14th is the observance of WMBD when lights will be dimmed. Comm. Myers suggested having an NRC event for the May 11, 2024 celebration of WMBD to raise awareness of the importance of dark skies. Comm. Goudreau suggested having the Girl Scouts and Boy Scout participate and earn a Dark Sky badge.

**B. Engagement.**

**1. Pumpkin Smash.**

Comm. Goudreau reported the Pumpkin Smash is finalized for November 4th, and requested volunteers for the event from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Pumpkin Smash flyer is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

**2. Holiday Lights Recycling.**

Comm. Goudreau reported the NRC's holiday lights recycling program has been finalized and will start on November 1, 2023 through the end of January 2024. The collection locations will be at the City's Public Works Dept, the St. Charles Public Library, the Park District Pottawatomie Park Community Center, and Wasco Nursery. Volunteers are needed to pick up the lights several times per week. The flyer for this program is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

**C. Advisory.**

Comm. Johnson reported the Urban Forestry Management Plan will be revised to update the City's goals, tree inventory and other sections of the Plan.

**D. Ad-Hoc.**

Chair. Nagy reported the Mayor and City Administrator plan to poll City Council regarding the NRC's single-use bag initiative. Chair. Nagy may address the City's Government Services Committee on October 23rd.

**7. Communications – Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports**

Motion to approve and place on file the Public Services Division tree activity reports for September 2023. Motion by Comm. Otto, second by Comm. Johnson to approve the reports. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:03 p.m.

**8. Additional Items**

**A. Commissioners**

Chair. Nagy reported there will be a walk with a master arborist on October 21st in Naperville.

**B. City Staff**

Mr. Reineking reported a path around the City's Oak savannah on South 7th Avenue was recently installed as part of an Eagle Scout project, and additional Oak trees will be planted in the spring.

**C. Visitor(s)**

Joseph Cannizzaro introduced himself to all present. Mr. Cannizzaro is a biologist and graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and resident of St. Charles. He spoke to the NRC in support of removing the Fox River dam. Mr. Cannizzaro explained he has studied imperiled and endangered wildlife in Kane County and the removal of the dam would be beneficial for turtles and other native wildlife, while not negatively impacting the aesthetics of the river. He recommended the NRC submit comments in support of removing the dam to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Friends of the Fox River and the Mayor of St. Charles.

Comm Johnson, who is a biologist with the Corps of Engineers, provided a brief recap of recent public hearings on the topic and encouraged Mr. Cannizzaro and interested members of the NRC to provide their comments on the topic to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Comm. Miller Hill noted the importance of City Council having information on the costs and liability issues related to removing versus maintaining the dam. Chair. Nagy noted the NRC, in its advisory role, can make a recommendation supporting removal of the dam to City Council. Additionally, Comm. Mengler will write an article for The Den on this topic.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Mengler, second by Comm. Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:09 p.m.