

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
November 9, 2017**

Members Present: Chair. Ralph Grathoff, Kathy Brens, Jon Duerr, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Valerie Blaine, Pam Otto, Caroline Wilfong

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Marcelline D'Argento

Visitors Present: Heather Gondreau, Lee Haggas, Loren Nagy

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:05 p.m.

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

None.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the September 14, 2017 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Brens, second by Comm. Myers to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:09 p.m.

4. Old Business

None.

5. Natural Resources Commission

The Commissioners reviewed the second draft of the revisions to City Code to reflect the transition by the Tree Commission to a Natural Resources Commission. Comm. Myers noted it may be difficult to get four high school students to commit to participating on the NRC, however, four students are not required for the NRC [four is the maximum number of student participants as proposed in the draft Code]. Comm. Brens will check the curriculum at St. Charles East High School, and reach out to teachers and students to encourage participation with the NRC. NRC participation could also be included on students' college applications. The Commissioners requested the addition of the word "pruning" to the activities listed in Section 12.20.050 paragraph 3; staff will make this addition.

Chair. Grathoff confirmed the next step for the transition would be review of the proposed Code amendments by the City's legal counsel; Mr. Adesso confirmed. The Tree Commission would not need to review the draft Code again unless changes were made by legal counsel. Comm. Myers inquired as to the possible timing of the transition. Mr. Adesso explained the next Government Services Committee meeting would be the fourth Monday of January 2018. Chair. Grathoff noted the transition could be completed by February 2018.

Motion by Comm. Duerr to approve the second draft of the amendments to City Code 12.20 [with the afore-mentioned addition] and forward to the City's legal counsel for review, second by Comm. Brens. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:17 p.m.

6. New Business

Chair. Grathoff inquired as to possible new salting practices this winter. Mr. Adesso explained the City is continuing its sustainable salting practices, and crews are receiving training on de-icing and snow plowing techniques and operations. Mr. Adesso noted the City has been using significantly less salt and also applying a reddish-brown colored commercial product. The commercial product is effective when applied at lower temperatures and helps prevent snow from bonding to the pavement, thereby reducing the need to apply large amounts of salt.

Mr. Adesso noted the City's snow fleet has been gradually updated with new trucks/equipment that provide better control and strategic salting. Comm. Hauser inquired as to the expense of untreated versus pre-treated salt. Mr. Adesso explained that although pre-treated salt is more expensive, the City uses less.

Comm. Duerr commented on the culvert project at the campus of Thompson Middle School. Comm. Duerr spoke with the schools' maintenance staff and was informed that the project was related to City requirements and that the upper portion of the detention area will be used for athletic fields. Comm. Duerr inquired as to whether the school project was related to the City's State Street Creek Watershed Plan. Mr. Adesso clarified that detention requirements are based upon the county's ordinances. The school detention project was not an identified project in the City's Plan, but it does benefit the watershed. Mr. Adesso stated the City's Watershed and Stormwater Master Plans are required for grant funding, and the City may receive grants for native landscapes, creekbed restorations and other projects.

Comm. Duerr inquired if the proposed plans for relocating the Police Department to West Main Street have been finalized yet, and noted there is marshland under old shopping mall. Mr. Adesso explained the Police Dept will be required to have detention similar to the Thompson Middle School project based on the county's ordinances. Comm. Brens noted the trees around the old shopping mall should be preserved.

Mr. Nagy inquired as to potential plans to replace the Fox River dam. Mr. Adesso explained a study and concept plan were developed for the Active River Project. A civil engineering firm conducted a proof of concept which included a hydrology study, cost estimates and permitting requirements. Mr. Adesso encouraged the Commissioners and visitors to review the River Corridor Foundation website which includes its Master Plan; the Bob Leonard River Walk, among other projects, was part of the Master Plan.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Chair. Grathoff and Comm. Myers commented on the positive responses received from the school libraries regarding the book, *The Sparrow and the Trees*, which was donated to the City's elementary schools by the Tree Commission in October.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up

Mr. Adesso informed the Commission about a competition promoted by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. The competition was between Geneva High School and Batavia High School for the largest brush pile from clearing Buckthorn and Honeysuckle from forest preserve property. This may be a way to involve students in the clean-up of Langum Woods.

8. Communications – Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for September and October 2017

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

9. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Myers was in Slovenia recently when tree planting was being done. She spoke with one of the workers who informed her they also value diversity in planting.

Comm. Brens expressed her thanks to everyone at Public Works who worked to repair the water main break and restore the parkway in front of her home.

B. City Staff

None.

C. Visitors

Ms. Gondreau commented on pumpkin collection last Saturday, November 4th at the farm near the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva. This may be a possible event for the NRC next year.

10. Adjournment

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