

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
APRIL 12, 2018**

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

Members Absent: Kathy Brens

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

Visitors Present: Frank Esposito, Lee Haggas, Loren Nagy, Dave Thayer, Patty Thayer, John Thornhill, Cathleen Tracy

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

The above-referenced visitors introduced themselves to all present. Mr. Haggas and Mr. Nagy will be instated as Commissioners of the Natural Resources Commission [NRC]. Mr. Esposito and Mr. Thornhill were in attendance as representatives of America in Bloom [AIB]. Mr. and Mrs. Thayer, and Ms. Tracy were in attendance to discuss the City's 7th Avenue Creek project.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the March 8, 2018 Natural Resources Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Otto to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:02 p.m.

4. Arbor Day Commissioners

The Commissioners discussed the Arbor Day Stewardship Award, and selected Chris Scott as the recipient. Motion by Comm. Duerr to present the Arbor Day Stewardship Award to Chris Scott, second by Comm. Myers. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.

Comm. Otto confirmed the students of Wild Rose Elementary School Woods Club will make a presentation and bring a display of artwork for the Arbor Day celebration. However, there is no school for District 303 on Friday, April 27, 2018; therefore, the tree planting at Wild Rose School may need to be moved to Thursday, April 26th. Comm. Otto will contact the Woods Club teacher to discuss changing the planting date.

America in Bloom

Mr. Esposito and Mr. Thornhill confirmed AIB's participation in the Arbor Day celebration which will include seed distribution and tree care information. Promoting AIB and raising community awareness about AIB's activities during Arbor Day are key. The focus of both the NRC and AIB are compatible, and AIB would like to start a partnership with the NRC. Mr. Adesso noted that Marcia Koenen will be AIB's volunteer coordinator. In addition to the NRC's tree raffle at the Arbor Day event, AIB would like to raffle a jumbo red geranium plant [donated by Ball Seed Company]. The Commissioners agreed to have AIB participate in the raffle, and Ms. D'Argento will add this information to the Arbor Day program.

Staff

Ms. D'Argento inquired if any of the Commissioners would like to accept the Arbor Day Proclamation from Mayor Rogina at the City Council meeting on Monday, April 16, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. Chair. Grathoff will attend the meeting and accept the Proclamation from the Mayor. Other members of the NRC also expressed interest in attending the City Council meeting.

Mr. Craft confirmed with Comm. Otto that two sites have been selected at Wild Rose School for Arbor Day tree planting.

5. Old Business

None.

6. New Business

A. Poor Pruning Practices in St. Charles

Chair. Grathoff reported poor pruning practices had been observed on private commercial property located at East Main Street and Tyler Road. Mr. Craft inspected the trees and confirmed that no City trees had been pruned. Comm. Duerr commented the trees were likely trimmed to increase retail visibility, and asked what the City's standards are for trees on commercial property. Mr. Nagy explained that other municipalities such as Libertyville have strict standards for maintaining tree cover within the city, parkway trees cannot be pruned by non-City workers and all trees removed must be replaced in kind, for example. Comm. Myers recalled that previously the City did not endeavor to establish the regulation of trees on private property. Mr. Adesso noted there are building/zoning ordinances already in place regarding minimum tree counts and tree preservation on private property; the Commissioners may review this information in the City Code. Chair. Grathoff asked if the City would send a letter to the commercial business owner regarding the poor pruning. Mr. Adesso explained the City's Building and Code Enforcement Department, not Public Works, would issue that type of letter.

B. Location/Day of NRC Monthly Meetings

Mr. Adesso asked the Commissioners to consider changing the NRC's monthly meeting location and/or the day of the monthly meetings in order to accommodate the additional members of the NRC and visitors. The NRC could continue to meet on the second Thursday of the month at the Public Works facility [1405 South 7th Avenue], or change the day of the monthly meetings based on when a larger room at the Municipal Center would be available. Comm. Otto noted Park District facilities are also available for NRC meetings. The Commissioners will consider this information and make a decision at the next NRC meeting in May.

C. NRC Logo

The new NRC logo was well received by the Commissioners. The logo is displayed on the City's website, in the Arbor Day window in the atrium at the Municipal Center and it will be included in the Arbor Day program.

D. NRC Topics

Mr. Adesso communicated some suggested topics for the NRC on behalf of [appointee] Comm. Heather Goudreau: river clean-up, backyard compost bin sale, bike path clean-up, pumpkin recycling, walk/bike to work/school event, Christmas lights recycling and earth hour. Comm. Otto suggested pumpkin bowling down the hill at Pottawatomie Park as part of a pumpkin recycling event.

Mr. Adesso explained that while City staff supports and facilitates the activities of the NRC, the topics of interest and activities of the NRC will be determined by the NRC

Commissioners. Mr. Adesso noted the activities of the NRC are complimentary to some city projects including stormwater management and LED lighting, as well as the River Corridor Plan.

Comm. Zielger noted the City's *Boards and Commissions Manual* contains helpful information for new and current NRC Commissioners, including "Tips for New Commissioners." Ms. D'Argento will email a link to the manual to the new and current NRC Commissioners.

E. Dark Sky Presentation

Comm. Blaine will present information at the next NRC meeting in May.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

None.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up

Comm. Otto reported approximately twenty students from Elgin Community College will participate in clean-up efforts on Wednesday, April 25, 2018.

8. Communications – Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for January and February 2018

Motion by Comm. Otto to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Blaine. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:00 p.m.

9. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Comm. Myers commented on the NRC's invitation to the upcoming open house at the City's Electric Utility solar plant. Several Commissioners are interested in attending.

B. City Staff

Mr. Craft reported 115 trees will be planted this spring. However, planting has been delayed due to the weather.

C. Visitors

The above-referenced visitors requested information regarding the City's 7th Avenue Creek project including restoration, plans for green space and the possibility of residents volunteering with restoration and planting native prairie plants. Mr. Adesso responded the City is demolishing several houses in the 7th Avenue Creek floodplain, and when demolition is completed the area will be restored. The City selected from three different concepts for restoration and selected a naturalized concept. Mr. Adesso informed the visitors the contact for the project is Karen Young, the Assistant Director of Public Works-Engineering. The City's website also contains detailed information on the project as well as information on green infrastructure and native plants. The visitors will contact Ms. Young for additional information.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Ziegler to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Hauser. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:14 p.m.