

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
September 14, 2017**

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

Members Absent: Suzi Myers

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

Visitors Present: Heather Gondreau, Carol Haggas, Lee Haggas, Loren Nagy

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns

Visitors were introduced to all present.

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the July 13, 2017 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Ziegler, second by Comm. Otto to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:04 p.m.

4. Old Business

A. Mr. Craft reported approximately 150 trees will be planted in the parkways this fall. A number of Maple trees will be replaced during fall planting.

B. Mr. Craft informed the Commissioners that an inventory of the City's trees is underway. Graf Tree Care has made good progress working in the northwest quadrant to document the City's tree population.

5. Natural Resources Commission

Public Works staff provided the Commission with a first draft of proposed revisions to the City Code [Title 12, Chapter 12.20, Sections .040 and .050] to reflect the transition from the St. Charles Tree Commission to the St. Charles Natural Resources Commission.

Mr. Reineking summarized the draft is intended to reflect conversations the Tree Commission has had for the past several months. Mr. Adesso further stated the idea for the Tree Commission's transition to a Natural Resources Commission ("NRC") was initially presented to the City's Government Services Committee ("GSC") about six months ago. Since then there has been support and feedback from elected officials who have interacted with Public Works staff, and they are awaiting the Tree Commission's decision on whether it will move forward with the transition to a NRC. The draft code revisions have not been presented to any elected officials at this time. Mr. Adesso noted the proposed revisions were drafted by Ms. D'Argento as a foundation for the Tree Commission to build on moving forward.

Mr. Adesso explained there would be four steps to finalizing the NRC transition: 1) the Tree Commission and City staff will finalize the draft of the proposed revisions to City Code, 2) the City's legal counsel would then review the draft Code revisions, 3) the proposed revisions would be presented to the GSC, and 4) the City Council would formally adopt the revisions into the Code and the Code would be officially amended.

The Commissioners reviewed in detail and discussed the first draft of the proposed Code revisions as follows:

- The revisions reflect a broader umbrella which encompasses the responsibilities of the Tree Commission - no responsibilities were eliminated. Additional responsibilities were included to reflect to proposed activities of a NRC.
- St. Charles will continue to maintain its Tree City USA designation.
- The number of Commissioners would increase from nine (9) to eleven (11) members.
- Four (4) additional non-voting student members would be included. There is strong interest at the high school level in natural resources programs.
- Possibly one upper class student member and one lower class student member could participate from each of the City's two public high schools and/or local colleges with a time commitment to the NRC of one school semester.
- Non-voting student members would be appointed by the NRC.
- Meeting frequency would be once per month.
- The Code does not preclude the NRC from discussing relevant issues with the St. Charles Park District, School District or City other entities.
- Biotic and abiotic inter-relationships are recognized in the revised Code.
- The Mayor would continue to appoint new Commissioners; the Public Works Department would not become involved in this process.

City staff will update the draft Code to reflect the discussions held at this meeting. An updated second draft will be provided to the Commission for review as soon as it is available, and placed on the agenda for the November 2017 meeting.

6. New Business

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Comm. Myers, in absentia, proposed the purchase of a book entitled *The Sparrow and the Trees* for each of the City's elementary school libraries [twelve copies]. The book is a folktale depicting various tree species and their characteristics. Motion by Comm. Duerr, second by Comm. Brens to purchase the books. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:45 p.m. City staff will place the book order utilizing the City's Arbor Day budget.

B. Langum Woods Clean-Up

Comm. Otto reported Ms. Gondreau has reached out to an environmental club at St. Charles East High School and is waiting to hear back on their participation. Comm. Blaine suggested contacting some of the environmental studies teachers at the schools regarding a possible field trip during a school day. Key Clubs may also be interested in participating. Comm. Blaine noted there is a teacher who is currently coordinating field trips with her at Creek Bend Nature Center, and she may also be interested in participating at Langum Woods.

8. Communications – Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports – July / August 2017

Motion by Comm. Brens to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Otto. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:50 a.m.

9. Additional Items

A. Commissioners

Looking ahead, Chair. Grathoff asked if there is another elementary school teacher who may become involved in Arbor Day similarly to Mrs. Tieche, who recently retired from Munhall Elementary School. Ms. Gondreau noted Norton Creek Elementary School has a large earth club and an outdoor education garden; there may be teachers at the school who would be interested in supporting Arbor Day.

Comm. Blaine noted there is an event this Saturday morning to measure trees for the Kane County Big Tree Registry. There is also an opportunity to participate in the Adopt a Turtle program which benefits endangered Blanding's turtles. Comm. Otto has already adopted a turtle.

Comm. Brens informed the Commission and visitors about the Grave Reminders Cemetery Walk coming up in October.

Comm. Duerr thanked the City staff for the holistic improvement to the parkway at Kehoe Drive and Horne Street where Norway Maple trees were removed.

Mr. Nagy commented on the upcoming sustainable landscape event at the Chicago Botanic Garden which will feature low maintenance landscapes.

Ms. Gondreau announced there will be a Green Fair at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in late September.

Comm. Otto reported the beekeeping issue had been resolved and an ordinance was passed which tends to favor beekeepers. The overall issue did not involve any major health concerns, but was essentially a neighborhood dispute.

B. City Staff

None.

C. Visitors

Mr. & Mrs. Haggas thanked the Commission for welcoming them to the meeting and expressed interest in participating in the NRC.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Otto to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Duerr. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:00 p.m.