

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
TREE COMMISSION MEETING  
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN  
May 11, 2017**

**Members Present:** Chair. Ralph Grathoff, Kathy Brens, Jon Duerr, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Pam Otto, Caroline Wilfong

**Members Absent:** Valerie Blaine, Ron Ziegler

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

**Visitors Present:** Heather Goudreau, 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**

Ms. Goudreau and Mr. Nagy were welcomed by the Commissioners.

Comm. Brens expressed concern about a dead tree by the St. Charles History Museum that she understood would not be replaced. Mr. Reineking stated the City had planned to replace the tree tomorrow, May 12, 2017.

**3. Minutes Review and Approval**

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

**4. Old Business**

**A. Arbor Day Recap**

Mr. Reineking thanked everyone for their participation in the annual Arbor Day celebration. He noted Mrs. Tieche's retirement from Munhall School, as she has been a primary participant in the City's Arbor Day celebrations for several years. Comm. Otto stated there are other school groups that may want to participate instead of the Munhall School students. For example, there is an Earth Savers Club at Norton Creek Elementary School and a Woods Club at Wild Rose Elementary School. The Commissioners and staff were impressed with the level of interest and involvement of the principal and teachers at Davis Primary School during the tree planting; perhaps they may participate in next year's Arbor Day celebration in Lincoln Park.

**5. New Business**

**A. Transition to Natural Resources Commission**

Chair. Grathoff began the discussion regarding the Tree Commission's transition to a Natural Resources Commission [NRC]. A mission statement for the NRC was reviewed by the City Council and the Commission could move forward with a plan and an outline of action items.

Mr. Adesso indicated the staff would work on the necessary code revision[s] to effect the Commission's transition to a NRC. Staff will have a draft ready for the next Tree Commission meeting.

Comm. Otto noted parameters might be important to have, but could be relatively broad so the NRC is not restricted in its scope by ordinances. Mr. Adesso and Comm. Otto noted trees should remain the primary focus of the NRC as it is important to maintain St. Charles' Tree City USA certification. Comm. Otto stated the NRC could decide what to undertake based on how much time could be spent by the Commissioners and if the number of members were to increase. Mr. Nagy commented on the

use of the word “sustainability” which may be too broad if used in connection with the NRC’s activities.

Comm. Duerr noted de-icing salt getting into the river and on the parkway trees may be a potential issue for the NRC, balancing street / driving safety with environmental concerns. Mr. Adesso explained the NRC could work with the City Council to provide input with the goal of balancing green practices with the quality of services the City provides, such as sensible salting.

Comm. Duerr commented that he was impressed with the level of work and environmental planning the City has done with regard to the 7th Avenue Creek and State Street Creek. Mr. Adesso confirmed Public Works Engineering staff is working on a watershed plan and storm sewer plan.

Mr. Nagy inquired if any study has been done regarding the loss of Ash trees, which are high water consumption trees, in connection with increased stormwater runoff. Mr. Adesso explained that there are detailed stormwater ordinances in place at the county and municipal levels, but the NRC could provide commentary.

Mr. Adesso stated the NRC could be expanded to more than nine members [the current number of Tree Commissioners] as long as there are an odd number of members. A proposal regarding the number NRC members, the number of meetings the NRC would have and some of its key initiatives could be presented to the City Council. If the number of members were increased, those who are interested in joining the NRC could submit an application to the City; new members are then appointed by the Mayor.

Comm. Duerr suggested the NRC might have different divisions such as trees, stormwater, public health, etc. The members of the NRC could vote on issues they wish to pursue. Comm. Otto noted the Tree Commission currently has a separate Education Committee, for example. Comm. Brens requested confirmation that meetings by committees within a commission would not violate the Open Meetings Act. The Open Meetings Act states “deliberation of public matters” constitutes a public meeting.

Mr. Adesso commented the City is involved in a green pact with other municipalities. A chloride study is also being conducted by an outside environmental firm. He extended an invitation to the Commissioners to come to the Public Works office to discuss these topics if anyone is interested in obtaining more information.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### **A. Education Committee**

Comm. Myers thanked everyone who went to Davis Primary School to read and interact with the students for Arbor Day. The Public Services tree crew was great and enjoyed talking with the children.

Comm. Wilfong commented on a documentary entitled The Edible Schoolyard about school children growing, cooking and eating food grown at on the grounds of the school featured in the documentary.

Comm. Otto reported there will be an aquaponics system installed at Hickory Knolls in collaboration with FONIA International Inc. of Geneva.

### **B. Langum Park Clean-Up**

None.

7. **Communications - Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports April 2017**  
Motion by Comm. Brens to approve the above-referenced reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Myers. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:50 p.m.
8. **Additional Items**
- A. Commissioners**  
The Commissioners discussed various recycling programs for school books and supplies such as Locker Leftovers. Haines Middle School recently donated 150 boxes of books from the school library. The books and materials are made available to any area school, bible school, after school programs, etc. that can use them.
- B. City Staff**  
Mr. Adesso described an organization that recycles corporate materials. Repurpose Materials, Inc. has a wide variety of items available for resale that include steel roofs, plastic bins and large cargo nets, for example.
- Mr. Reineking informed the Commissioners a blog article was posted on the City’s website regarding the Urban Forestry Management Plan. He encouraged the Commissioners to submit blog articles as well.
- C. Visitors**  
None
9. **Adjournment**  
Motion by Comm. Myers to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Otto. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.