

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN
SEPTEMBER 8, 2016**

Members Present: Chair. Ralph Grathoff, Valerie Blaine, Kathleen 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, Lisa Vielbig

Visitors Present: n/a

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Introductions of Visitors: n/a

3. Minutes Review and Approval

Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the July 14, 2016 Tree Commission meeting. Motion made by Comm. Duerr second by Comm. Blaine to accept and place the minutes on file [as amended]. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none; absent Comm. Myers. Motion carried at 7:10 p.m.

4. Old Business

A. Update on the Urban Forestry Management Plan

Mr. Reineking reported the Urban Forestry Management Plan (“UFMP”) will be finalized in the next two (2) weeks with Comm. Blaine’s comments. The UFMP will then be presented to the to the City of St. Charles’ (“City”) Government Services Committee (“GSC”) at the November 2016 meeting. Chair. Grathoff stated the draft UFMP could be discussed with the Batavia Tree Commission and Geneva Natural Resources Committee at the joint meeting in October 2016.

B. Update on Three Maple Trees at Kehoe Drive and Horne Street

Mr. Craft reported the Maple trees were trimmed and inspected. Two of the trees were cracked and have since been removed. One of the Maple trees is still standing. The City would like to replant one of the two sites where the trees were removed, but will discuss replanting with the resident. The City also restored the parkway at this location and grass is now growing. Additional Maple trees on the south side of Horne Street were also pruned.

C. Update on Langum Park Restoration

Comm. Otto reported assistance with restoration may be provided through boy scouts’ volunteer hours. Mr. Adesso indicated there may be resources in the City’s forestry budget to utilize for removal of invasive species such as Buckthorn and Honeysuckle, and for stump treatment. This work could be scheduled to benefit from winter pricing, and staff will make an assessment of the budget this winter. Comm. Otto indicated scout volunteers could assist with trail maintenance instead of restoration.

D. Update on Natural Resources Commission

Mr. Adesso presented the new mission statement to the GSC at the August 2016 meeting. The GSC supports the reorganization of the Tree Commission into a Natural Resources Commission. Mr. Adesso suggested after the completion of the UFMP, revisions to the City Code regarding a Natural Resources Commission could be drafted for review by the Tree Commission. The scope of the Natural Resources Commission will continue to include trees as well as green infrastructure initiatives, education, composting and other natural resources-related issues.

E. Woods of Fox Glen / Outlot B – Unauthorized Tree Removal / Restoration

Chair. Grathoff received a letter dated July 26, 2016 from Douglas Hancock, a resident of Wayne, IL. The letter is regarding “approximately ten acres [of property]... worked on for restoration.” The property is located in the Woods of Fox Glen and is owned by the City. Mr. Adesso stated the Mayor, City Administrator and City attorney are in contact with Mr. Hancock with regard to this issue. However, since Mr. Hancock’s letter was directed to Chair. Grathoff, the Tree Commission has an opportunity to comment for the record/minutes.

Comms. Blaine, Brens, Duerr, Grathoff, Hauser, Otto, Wilfong and Ziegler commented on this issue. The overall consensus of the Commissioners was: the rationale and intention with regard to restoration may have been good; however, a person/entity cannot make unauthorized changes to the property of another person/entity; the City was not consulted, nor was permission requested from the City to undertake the restoration of the City-owned property; Mr. Hancock’s actions were unacceptable.

5. New Business

A. News or Concerns from Public Works

- i. Fall Planting 2016** – Mr. Craft reported planting sites are being prepared for fall 2016 planting. Approximately 125 trees will be planted this fall.
- ii. Tree Trimming** – Mr. Craft reported City-wide trimming will be done during the winter months.

B. News or Concerns from Tree Commission

- i. Norway Maples Preliminary Discussion** – Comm. Duerr stated some of the Norway Maples planted in the 1970’s may be from wild stock, and the City should consider removing these types of trees. Norway Maples have an outward growth pattern and should be limbed up to a minimum of ten feet. Comm. Ziegler stated Maples, in general, should be aggressively pruned starting at 10 – 12 years. Mr. Craft agreed with the Commissioners and reported the City has started to remove Norway Maples; 50 – 60 have been removed already in the southwest quadrant of the City. The UFMP also addresses the reduction of Norway Maples in the City’s parkways.

Comm. Ziegler asked how many Ash trees are left in the City. Mr. Craft stated there are 100 – 150 Ash trees remaining.

- ii. Recommendation to Ban Honeybee-Keeping Within City Limits** – Comm. Otto reported the City’s Planning and Development Committee is considering a ban on honeybee-keeping. The ban is based upon an interpretation that residential honeybee-keeping may be considered agricultural use of residential property. The issue of residential honeybee-keeping originated [in part] from a dispute between two residents: one resident with an unleashed dog and another resident/neighbor with honeybees that do not stay on his property. Comm. Otto stated the Park District supports pollinators and it’s important to distinguish between wasps and other stinging insects and honeybees. Comm. Otto would like the aldermen to receive additional, accurate information about honeybees before making a decision to completely ban honeybee-keeping within the City. Mr. Adesso explained that anyone can attend a public meeting. He indicated the Commissioners

may attend and encourage other residents to attend the next Planning and Development Committee meeting on Monday night [September 12, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.].

The Commissioners also discussed: the impact of anti-mosquito and broad-spectrum spraying on bees, butterflies, birds and other insect populations; the benefit of insects as pollinators for agriculture; whether honeybees are considered to be livestock; the negative impact of eradicating coyotes; sudden [bee] colony collapse; and the need for further study on honeybee-keeping. Comm. Otto noted the City of Chicago has bee hives on the roof of its city hall, but other municipalities may also be moving toward banning bee-keeping.

Mr. Adesso explained that if the Tree Commissioners are interested in expressing their opinions, they can submit statements to the GSC before the City makes a decision to amend its ordinances to ban honeybee-keeping. The Tree Commissioners may also contact their aldermen.

6. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee – Comm. Myers absent

B. Langum Park Clean-Up – Please see 4.C. above.

7. Communications

A. Approval of Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for July and August 2016

Motion to accept and place on file the above-referenced reports. Motion made by Comm. Otto second by Comm. Brens to accept and place on file the reports as presented. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none; absent Comm. Myers. Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.

B. Electric Division Tree Activity Reports

Reports not available for review at this time.

8. Additional Items from Commissioners

A. Commissioners

Comm. Ziegler praised Comm. Otto's efforts with regard to the honeybee issue.

B. City Staff

Mr. Reineking confirmed plans for the October 20, 2016, joint meeting of the Batavia and St. Charles Tree Commissions and Geneva Natural Resources Committee. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. at Creek Bend Nature Center and will include food and beverages. Ms. D'Argento will coordinate the invitations and responses. Comm. Blaine suggested an "Oaktober" Oak awareness presentation as a topic for the joint meeting; the Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Reineking informed the Commissioners the Park District requested advance notification for the City's 2017 Arbor Day event. The Commissioners agreed to again use Lincoln Park as the location for Arbor Day 2017. City staff will notify the Park District.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Brens to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Blaine. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none; absent Comm. Myers. Motion carried at 8:20 p.m.