

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
TREE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011**

Members Present: Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers, Bill Bangs, Valerie Blaine, Ralph Grathoff, Pam Otto

Members Absent: Jim Nau, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler

Others Present: Pat Konishi, Peter Suhr

Presented by Suzi Myers. Informal discussion held regarding the September meeting. In the past, this meeting has been a joint-meeting with the Batavia Tree Commission. The meetings have been held in places of interest and have covered specific topics of interest to both groups. Batavia hosted last year's meeting, and the discussion was on topics of mutual interest, not a specific topic. This meeting was very successful and informative. The Commission needs to decide if September will be a joint meeting, where it will be held and if the topic of discussion will be specific or more general. Locations were discussed and agreed that meeting should be inside because there is not sufficient daylight in September to meet outside. One location suggested was Hickory Knolls which is a Park District Facility. It was agreed that Commissioners would communicate with emails regarding location and topic suggestions. Once formalized, the City would be notified to insure proper posting of a public meeting.

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers at 6:40 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of Visitors and Comments and Concerns

Omnibus Vote

4. Recommend approval of May 2011 Minutes

Motion by Valerie Blaine, second by Ralph Grathoff to accept the May 2011 Minutes as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Jim Nau, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler- Motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion on City Forestry/Ordinance Plan

Tabled until future meeting.

B. Discussion on Tree Care Report by Jerry Schroeder

Tabled until future meeting.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Peter Suhr presented. An additional 121 ash trees were confirmed as being infected with the EAB in June; Public Services plans to remove 140 trees during July. The number of trees being identified and removed is increasing. When infected ash trees are removed, the City chips and grinds the branches to a size small enough that the larva cannot exist, as do our contractors. Fall tree planting may be 300 trees.

The City has been able to replace the trees removed and remain within the budget to this point. As the number of infected trees increases, we may look at a plan that would allow for large scale removals and plantings that would require increased funding. Any plan of this nature would require City Council approval. The City has removed and replanted approximately a quarter of the 5,000 public ash trees; there are an estimated 20,000 private trees. The next step would be to have the City Council determine how aggressive to be in the matter of private trees and enforcement. City ordinance states that if a tree presents a health or safety hazard, the owner may be required to remove it. While this is the policy, it has not been the practice. At this time, we inform the resident and ask that the tree be removed.

B. News and Concerns from Public Works

None.

C. Plaque for Peter Grathoff

Peter Suhr presented. The memorial plaque for Peter Grathoff is completed and will be installed in the next month. When the specific date is determined, an email will be sent to the Commissioners in the event anyone would like to attend. The tree in Peter Grathoff's honor was planted during the spring.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

No report.

B. Publicity Committee

No report.

C. Arbor Day Committee

No report.

8. Communications

Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports

Motion by Pam Otto, second by Bill Bangs to accept the May and June 2011 Communications-Electric Division/Tree Activity Report as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Jim Nau, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler-
Motion carried.

9. Comments

A. Commissioners

Ralph Grathoff had questions regarding the Urban Forestry Plan referenced in minutes from previous meetings. It was explained that the ordinance establishing the Tree Commission contained an initiative for the Commission of preparing an Urban Forestry Plan. This plan is in the initial stages, representatives have met with staff to begin developing the plan. The initial goal is to develop an outline of the points to be covered. Peter Suhr indicated the Commission could then choose one point, such as Langum Park, to focus on. Ralph Grathoff stated he would be willing to conduct research online to be of assistance. Peter Suhr provided him a copy of some plans previously collected from other municipalities. Suzi Myers indicated that after a general outline is created, the entire Commission would be involved in details and plans.

Bill Bangs had several questions that had been posed to him. He inquired if there was a list of preferred vendors for residents to use for EAB removals or treatment. Peter Suhr stated that one did not exist at this time, but Public Services is researching the possibility of using our higher volume purchasing to develop a competitive scenario. It would consist of a number of vendors creating a consistent rate structure for EAB removal and planting. At the present time, residents

may call Peter Suhr, Ben Deutsch or the Public Works Office to get the names of vendors that the City is either currently using or has used in the past. These are not recommendations.

Bill Bangs asked why during brush pick-up, the brush is not chipped on site. The brush pick-up program is provided by a contractor. The contractor determines the manner of disposal. If the City trims a public tree, in many cases the chipping is done on site.

Another concern raised was residents wishing to remove buckthorn plants in areas regulated by Home Owners Association's (HOA) regulations. The City cannot address these issues, because the plants are on private property. Valerie Blaine stated that the buckthorn has not been declared a nuisance species; nuisance species are subject to removal mandates. Education of residents and the HOA's is one step that can be taken. Many do not realize that it is a highly invasive species.

Question was raised if the Tree Commission can do anything to prompt entities such as the Park District, the School District, Library, etc. to cease "volcano" mulching of trees. A City Ordinance exists stating volcano mulching is not permitted. Enforcement is extremely difficult. Peter Suhr stated Public Services tries to maintain mulching on public trees, but shortly after the mulch is spread properly it is re-mounded. It was suggested the education of proper mulching techniques might be helpful. Public Works routinely publishes information on proper mulching. Suzi Myers indicated that in the past a showcase was presented demonstrating the techniques, but it was not successful in solving the problem.

Discussion was held on the identification of EAB infected trees is conducted. Peter Suhr stated that as City crews and contractors are trimming and/or inspecting trees, reports are made of the affected trees. He emphasized that one of the most important means is when residents contact the City with information on trees; the City is able to inspect the tree and take appropriate action.

Another topic was the planting of trees on the parkway. Residents are not permitted to plant trees on the parkways of their residence. If a tree has been removed and is going to be replaced, the resident is given choices on the species and may also choose to upgrade tree size by paying an additional amount. In addition, the 50/50 tree program allows residents to choose trees for planting in the parkway and pay half the cost of the tree; the City will plant the tree. All of these options are subject to approval by the City Arborist.

B. Staff

None

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10. Adjournment

Motion by Valerie Blaine, second by Pam Otto to adjourn meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Jim Nau, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler-
Motion carried.

/pjk