

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
TREE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012**

Members Present: Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers, Valerie Blaine, Pam Otto, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Chair. Jim Nau, Bill Bangs Ralph Grathoff

Others Present: Peter Suhr, Isabel Soderlind, Nicole Wang

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers at 6:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of Visitors and Comments and Concerns:

Joseph Masiohas, a resident of St. Charles was introduced. Mr. Masiohas indicated that he had bought a crab apple tree through the City's planting program. The tree was beautiful and healthy until the summer of 2009 when the City trimmed the tree "significantly". Since then, the "health" of the tree started to decline. His questions were: (1) How does the City determine to trim a tree? (2) Could the excessive trimming cause the tree to weaken?

Peter Suhr indicated there is currently a maintenance program in which most trees are trimmed approximately every five years. The City Arborist typically determines if and when the tree warrants trimming.

Commissioner Chris Scott indicated flowering crab trees are susceptible to "Fire Blight". This is an internal fungus and common in crab apple trees. The leaves falling are also another type of fungus that attacks this species. Commissioner Scott indicated the deterioration of the tree was probably not caused from the pruning, but this cannot be determined until the tree is inspected.

Commissioner Ziegler also explained some of the surrounding municipalities have ceased to plant flowering crabs on the parkways. These trees are difficult to maintain, are prone to many diseases, and sometimes are just not suitable for parkway planting.

Mr. Suhr suggested the resident leave his contact information. The City would research the history of the tree on its database and have it inspected. The inspection will determine the next steps of the process, i.e., treatment if it is warranted or removal if necessary. Mr. Suhr wants to assure the city parkway trees remain as healthy as possible.

Omnibus Vote

4. Recommend approval of January 2012 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Zavitz second by Commissioner Scott to accept the January 11, 2012 Minutes as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Nau, Bangs, Grathoff - Motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion on City Forestry/Ordinance Plan

Peter Suhr indicated that he has not heard from Chair. Nau, therefore a meeting has not been set up to discuss the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers mentioned that she would contact Chair. Nau and take the initiative to lead this effort.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Peter Suhr reported that another 200 ash trees were confirmed over December and January. Most of the trees identified were in the southeast quadrant of the city. At the last meeting, Council approved the removal of 61 additional ash trees; 41 of which were in the southwest quadrant and 12 of which were in the northeast quadrant.

There are 5400 parkway ash trees in the city. Half of the trees have been confirmed with EAB. A third of those trees have been removed and replaced with the exception of the CMD Industrial area. There are approximately 250 trees that are being treated. Some of the treating has been successful some have not. This too is being analyzed. There has not been any approval to move further on treatment.

EAB continues to be an issue throughout the region. Peter Suhr commented that the City is preparing its tree budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. While attending recent seminars, the City has learned that the number of removals will increase significantly in years four and five of the infestation. Public Works has been able to make realistic projections, both in the projected number of trees infected and corresponding financial impact. The City projects 95% of the ash population will be identified with EAB within the next 2 years.

The current projected budget will not be able to keep up with the number of removals and replacements. Mr. Suhr presented these findings and impact at the last Government Services meeting. Public Services requested direction and recommendations from Council.

After much discussion, Council recommended focusing on the removals. They requested Public Services outline a 3-year removal plan and the anticipated costs. Council also requested extrapolating the costs of replanting from a 3-year up to a 6-year plan. More data is being gathered and Mr. Suhr will present those findings to Council on April 9 at the Planning and Development meeting. Peter extended an invitation to the committee members.

In the meantime, the Urban Forestry program has gone out to bid. Six different contractors have submitted bids, which will identify a more accurate cost moving forward.

The average annual cost of tree removals and replacements for the past 3 years has been approximately \$350,000. The new interpretation from the Department of Labor indicates tree trimming and tree removal now falls within the prevailing wage law. This will incur a 40 to 80% increase in cost. This has been supported by the bids the City has been receiving.

Commissioner Ziegler asked how the Tree Commission could best support and voice their concerns to Council. He felt that Council should be better informed and educated regarding EAB, in particular to treatment options. Current research has found some success with treatment. With the significant cost increase in removals, treatment should be considered as an option. This may be a more viable and cost effective option.

B. News from Public Works: None

C. Langum Woods Clean Up.

Langum Woods Clean Up is planned for Tuesday, April 24 from 9:00 to 3:00 pm. There will be two separate sessions, 9:00 am and 12:30 pm on that day. There will be approximately 65 students in each group, for a total of 130 students. Commissioner Pam Otto added the curriculum will include an on-site program called "Fragile Fragments".

The St. Charles Park District instructors as well as Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers and Commissioner Pam Otto will be attending.

7. Committee Reports

- A. Education Committee:** No comments.
- B. Publicity Committee:** See Arbor Day Committee
- C. Arbor Day Committee**

Day of the Event: Friday, April 27 at 4:00 pm

Publicity: Commissioner Valerie Blaine submitted another publicity article that includes the history of Arbor Day. Commissioner Blaine will email the article to Nicole Wang and/or Isabel Soderlind for submission of the April Den.

Donation of Perennials - Midwest Ground Covers: Chair. Nau.

Midwest Ground Covers will donate perennials as they have in past years.

Speaker - Jon Duerr: Chair. Nau

Jon Duerr has been confirmed as the speaker at Arbor Day.

Contests: Photography Contest: Commissioner Blaine

Commissioner Blaine has contacted the faculty advisors of the photography clubs at St. Charles North and East High Schools. She will distribute contest flyers to both high schools. Entries may be submitted or mailed directly to the City of St. Charles, 2 E. Main Street, or emailed to pw@stcharlesil.gov. Photographs and drawings will be displayed in the First Floor display case at the Municipal building for two weeks, starting Monday, April 2. Entries will be displayed at Arbor Day event, weather permitting.

Commissioner Otto will research the newly issued gift cards from the Park District or possible Hay Ride as a prize.

A “Free Sundae” certificate from Colonial will be “awarded” to all children who have submitted a drawing. Commissioner Chris Scott will pick up the certificates from Colonial.

Art Activity for Children: Commissioner Blaine

Commissioner Blaine is organizing a “Leaf Rubbing” activity, which will be located in the tent. Commissioner Blaine will collect and borrow various items for the activity from the Nature Center.

Educational Materials: Public Services

The City will bring a variety of brochures to distribute.

Presentation of Colors: Commissioner Zavitz

American Legion Post 343 Color Guard and Cub Scout Pack Troop 113 from Lincoln School will present the colors. Commissioner Zavitz requested sandbags to assist holding up the flags on the stands.

Tree Demonstration – Graff Tree Care: Commissioner Scott

Commissioner Scott will conduct an “Interactive Climbing” demonstration with the assistance of the Cub Scout troop. This year the troop will be engaged in a First Aid demonstration with the climber already on the ground.

Entertainment: Chair. Nau

Rick Weals will provide musical entertainment.

Set up and Food: Public Works Department

Public Works will order cookies for the event, set up of chairs, podium, and speaker system. They will also display EAB materials and educational brochures.

Rent the Tent: Chair. Nau

PO has been created for A-1 Canopy. Isabel Soderlind has made contact with the vendor regarding the PO number. The tent will be delivered between 2:30 – 3:00 pm on April 27, with the Park District marking the utilities earlier in the day.

Invitations and Brochures: Public Works Department

Samples of the invitations and brochures were distributed to the committee for an initial review. Information is still needed from Chair. Nau to complete the brochures. Public Works will distribute the invitations to the mayor, aldermen, and department directors at the City.

The committee recommended the following edits:

- (1) Commissioner Scott requested “Wolf Den” be changed to Lincoln School Cub Scout Pack #113 on the invitation.
- (2) Vice-Chair Suzi Myers will conduct the drawing.

The brochure and invitation will be emailed to Chair. Nau for the additional background information needed on the brochure.

8. Communications

A. Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports

Motion by Otto, second by Ziegler to accept the January and February 2012 Communications-Electric Division/Tree Activity Report as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Nau, Bangs, Grathoff
Motion carried.

9. Comments

A. Commissioners

Commissioner Blaine mentioned she had a very successful burn in her woods both in the front and in back. The commissioner followed all safety precautions, protocols, and notified all the authorities.

Commissioner Otto apologized for being late for the meeting.

Commissioner Zavitz: None

Commissioner Scott complimented the current commission. He felt this commission was a good strong committee; he appreciated being part of the group.

Vice-Chair. Myers: None

Commissioner Ziegler complimented Peter Suhr for all his efforts representing the City and extending an invitation to attend City meetings.

B. Staff : None

10. Adjournment

Motion by Blaine second by Zavitz to adjourn meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Nau, Bangs, Grathoff - Motion carried.