

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
TREE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2012**

Members Present: Co-Chair Bill Bangs, Co-Chair Ron Ziegler, Valerie Blaine, Jon Duerr, Ralph Grathoff, Suzi Myers, Phil Zavitz,

Members Absent: Pam Otto

Others Present: Peter Suhr, Chris Adesso, Nicole Wang, Marcelline D'Argento

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Co-Chair Bill Bangs at 7:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Myers announced Commissioner Scott has had to resign as he purchased a home in Elburn, IL. He sent email to the Mayor on September 11, 2012. In addition, Chris Scott would still be glad to help with upcoming Arbor Day festivities.

3. Introductions of Visitors - Comments and Concerns:

No Visitors present.

Mr. Suhr introduced Chris Adesso (Public Services Division Manager). Chris has been with the city for three weeks now. He is not a licensed Arborist but interested in obtaining that. Marcelline D'Argento is our newest Administrative staff and has been with us for the last three months. She will be periodically attending some of the Tree Commission meetings.

The Commissioners took the time to introduce themselves for the new staff members:

Commissioner Duerr – This is his first Tree Commission meeting. He was appointed by the Mayor this summer.

Commissioner Myers – She has been a Commissioner since the inception of the Tree Commission.
Commissioner Blaine, Co-Chair Ziegler, Commissioner Zavitz, Co-Chair Bangs, and
Commissioner Grathoff

Omnibus Vote

4. Recommend approval of May 2012 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Zavits second by Commissioner Blaine to accept the May 9, 2012 Minutes as presented at 7:06 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Pam Otto (Vote by Proxy – In Favor of Approval), Abstain: Commissioner Duerr due to his first review as Tree Commissioner.
- Motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion on City Forestry/Ordinance Plan

Mr. Suhr stated as of the last time the Tree Commission met, everyone was thinking of an outside consultant for getting the Plan in place. He called Josh Behounek with Davey Tree Service to get a feel for what is available from the marketplace. Mr. Behounek has sent some examples. It is difficult to get him scheduled on a night the Tree Commission meets and the next available time he has is in January. Mr. Suhr recommends that we could get a smaller group of two Commissioners together to meet with him in October by opening a meeting act. The goal was to come up with a proposal for what we want to do for presentation so that Mr. Suhr can get a budget put together. Having budgeted dollars will allow us to get approval for a consultant to come in and manage the process for us. Co-Chair Bangs stated he would be interested in doing that, as well as Commissioner Grathoff. Mr. Suhr will obtain three dates to work on getting a meeting setup.

Commissioner Grathoff stated he would be glad to be involved and thinks this is an important first step on this initiative as he has read several plans and they can be quite lengthy. Mr. Suhr stated two Commissioners would suffice with the open meetings act. Commissioner Duerr asked what the publication is for the Open Meetings act. If it could be broadened that would be great. Co-Chair Ziegler wanted to know what we are trying to accomplish. Mr. Suhr suggested gathering ideas and what the Plan means to this group. This has not gone before the City Council yet. The Tree Commission would need City Council approval with a Plan that costs over \$20,000. A Plan of this nature is one of the core goals for this group originally and has not been done yet. It is the most logical next step.

Mr. Suhr feels he should get someone here to explain what the Plan means and getting started in the process. Commissioner Myers felt that having more Commissioners would be most beneficial and stated that using a calendar like Outlook would be helpful. Co-Chair Bangs asked who you need to announce the meeting to. Mr. Suhr said that it just needs to be posted. We do post meetings on our website and that may be picked up by local publications as well. Ms. Wang added that the Open Meetings Act states the meeting must be posted at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Co-Chair Ziegler asked if Mr. Suhr will be in charge of the agenda. Mr. Suhr said it is really about listening to the Davey Representatives presentation and then meet again to gather our initial thoughts. Commissioner Duerr stated we would need a "Scope of Services" from Davey to understand what they can do.

Co-Chair Bangs asked when was the last city Plan? Mr. Suhr stated that there never was any Plan drafted by the City. Co-Chair Bangs offered information on the website www.historicaeriels.com to be able to track historical changes for our city with regard to the Plan. Mr. Suhr said he would look into dates and that an evening date would be best for a larger group. Co-Chair Bangs asked if we are locked into working with Davey. Mr. Suhr said that we are not.

Commissioner Blaine asked if we require an Urban Forester. She offered a few suggestions with State Foresters. Co-Chair Ziegler asked where Mr. Suhr had gotten the other plans that he had shown the group in the past and if he still had them? Mr. Suhr does still have the plans and is willing to pass them around. They were from online sources and Penn State University. Commissioner Blaine stated U of I Forestry Department could be a resource. Mr. Suhr stated he is open to suggestions on other options. Mr. Suhr called Davey as he knew that they did this work. We are open to someone more local as well.

Co-Chair Bangs asked Commissioner Blaine to please email the ideas she has to the Tree Commission and Mr. Suhr. Co-Chair Ziegler asked Commissioner Blaine if she is suggesting State of Illinois would have more available? Commissioner Blaine stated that the State would definitely have resources as well as other Universities within Illinois. In addition, that could be a counter balance to what Davey has to offer. Commissioner Duerr asked if there are any models available from Tree City USA? Mr. Suhr stated he would have to look into that. Possibly they would have a template that could be used. Mr. Suhr stated that the idea for the start of this process is to determine how much the group wants to take on or how much the group would like to contract out. Co-Chair Bangs asked if the Davey proposal would be easier to get past by City Council or if something the Tree Commission would put together is best. Mr. Suhr stated if the Plan is reasonable, makes sense and can fit within the budget then it should be considered by Council. It is one of the core purposes of the Tree Commission as the ordinance reads. Co-Chair Bangs stated the group should do something to get a Plan in front of the city as there are a lot of trees coming down.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Mr. Suhr stated we are working on EAB every day. Last meeting, we received council approval to remove and replace about 3,000 Ash trees. We are working with our vendors to manage 1,000 trees per year. Found that the projection is really ramping up. Residents are happy to see us out there removing the dead trees. We have gone through a process of analyzing and rating the Ash trees we own and have identified the first 1,000 for removal. We are now ready to identify the next 1,000 trees for removal. Approximately 750 of the first 1,000 trees have been removed within the first 4-5 months. We are working to replant those and had 650 trees planted last spring, with another approximately 900 trees to be planted this fall. We are prepared to start planting by October 1st. Mr. Suhr anticipated being in front of City Council in the next month with the additional 1,000 tree sites for removal in the second phase and will continue the process. The goal was to track and finish within about three years. At this rate we might be done in about two and a half years.

Commissioner Zavitz stated he travels the surrounding cities and he sees a lot of trees and newer trees planted. With the newspaper article about watering out this summer, he has not seen anyone watering. The trees are not looking so well. Mr. Suhr commented trees are struggling with the drought, not just new trees but older trees as well. We did get approval for extra watering by contract and asked for residential help but did not get as much as needed.

Co-Chair Ziegler asked what happened to the Legacy program? Were there any successes? Mr. Suhr stated we started with 250 trees. A second and third treatment was done. There are approximately 200 trees left in that program and we are reviewing the trees year by year to determine if they are still candidates. Commissioner Duerr asked what the Legacy program was. Co-Chair Ziegler explained the treating for EAB program that started in 2009. Mr. Suhr stated that we have not abandoned the program and continue to treat. We are hopeful the trees will survive. The chemical is free to us; we provide the labor to do the treatment for City Right of Way properties.

Commissioner Myer received "Community Tree News" from the Morton Arboretum regarding treating news. The article stated that "Chemicals have been proven to prevent 99% of larval development in study trees". Commissioner Myer felt there is a ray of hope out there. The article stated that treating is not a silver bullet. Co-Chair Bangs stated that early application would have been in 2004. He asked when it was first diagnosed. Mr. Suhr stated that in St. Charles the first

case was in 2008 in the Windings and we were the first community in this area. Co-Chair Ziegler stated that the sad thing is that the Department of Agriculture did not support treating from the beginning. He stated it can be prevented with treating. It was unfortunate that Council voted to remove all the trees based on the Department of Agriculture's stance. Co-Chair Bangs asked if it is safe to say that all the Ash trees in the City are infected with EAB. Mr. Suhr stated no, we have not confirmed all City Ash trees with EAB. Ms. Wang stated that there are very few Ash trees that the Arbor team comes across that are in good condition. Co-Chair Ziegler stated that the Ash trees most affected are the Green Ash. The bugs go to the Green Ash first and then eventually the White Ash. Commissioner Grathoff asked if the supply of chemical will run out. Mr. Suhr stated that the provider of the chemical reviews the tree sites from year to year and then determines if we can continue and how much of a supply we will get based on their review. Our hope is by the end of this process we will still have Ash trees that survive. Co-Chair Ziegler stated we have to remember that once the bug has eaten all the Ash trees it can, it will move on.

Co-Chair Bangs asked how we determine "parkway". Mr. Suhr stated we use the property line and conditions outlined for the area with the Plat of Survey.

B. News from Public Works:

Mr. Suhr brought up the next step in the process is to determine how we prevent the community from experiencing a widespread issue like EAB again with another species. What do we do with the trees we are replacing to diversify ourselves enough? There are 900 trees to plant this fall and probably 2,500 trees to plant over the next two years. We also have a pretty open program where we allow the resident to choose a tree they would like to plant if it is on our provided list as an approved tree. 25-30% of those residents want a Maple in front of their yard. Are we getting ourselves into the same problem we have had before with the Ash. Mr. Suhr handed out a Chart showing the Species Frequency within the city. He opened the floor to gather some information from the Commissioners on their thoughts:

Commissioner Duerr: are we passive or active in selecting the trees to put on an approved list? Mr. Suhr stated we generally have been passive. In the past we have only planted 100 to 150 trees each season. Realizing the quantities we are dealing with now brings up the concern to have more control over the number of species of each planted. Commissioner Duerr stated residents just recognize the name of "Maple" and then choose accordingly. Mr. Suhr asked if the Commissioners would support a plan where we do not plant Maple species for the next five years? Commissioner Duerr stated that when he was on the City Council, J. Walters decided not to have anyone plant Honey Locust trees. He suggested that the city take charge and make sure we have diversity and then that is the choice available.

Co-Chair Ziegler: stated certain trees do well in the parkway area and some others are not that tolerant. As a Tree Commission we would do a service to our residents by learning. When it comes to picking a tree, teach others not just to pick by name but to be able to provide residents with specifics. The fact of the matter is that all these trees do have some bugs and he gave some examples. More than just diversity, we as a Tree Commission can be helpful to our residents by teaching them a little bit.

Commissioner Myers: stated she received a Linden but did not get a letter. It was beautiful for a while until the Japanese Beetles attacked it. She will do something about it. However, how many people will do that?

Co-Chair Bangs: asked if there is something going on with Maples? Many are not doing well. Co-Chair Ziegler stated it is too easy to say just “Maple” as all varieties of the Maple species have issues for each one. There was good discussion about the differences among the different Maples. Co-Chair Ziegler stated this is a big problem. Co-Chair Bangs asked each Commissioner to take one tree on the list and put together what we think should be communicated.

Ms. Wang: stated that we have 22 trees on the current selection list. Co-Chair Bangs asked if Fall Planting has been finalized yet. Mr. Adesso stated it has been roughly finalized. Mr. Suhr mentioned that we need to move ahead with the Fall Planting the way it is; but, we look to our next Spring Planting for the plan and long term solution. Commissioner Duerr stated that Co-Chair Ziegler has a good point and to think of the city as a “Nursery” like Schmidt and Bailey Nurseries in Oregon. The City should review the facts on the trees before just purchasing trees.

Commissioner Blaine: stated there is not much thought with what will happen to a tree in ten years.

Co-Chair Ziegler stated that the Tree Commission should be able to help the Public Services team. Commissioner Myers stated that she didn’t see why we could not just educate people as to what is happening by an article in the paper and the Den regarding diversification. Maybe what we ultimately land on is to take the choice of a tree away from the residents all together. Co-Chair Ziegler stated we should have a quota. Mr. Suhr stated that a quota does not allow you to get the perfect tree for the perfect site. Commissioner Duerr stated that he sees many mature trees that are taller and right under power lines. Why is that allowed? Ms. Wang added that we never had a differentiation on the list for species and their height for power lines. We have just gone to that with the letters as of June 1st of this year and now we call residents back who have power lines and have selected a tree that is too tall for that site.

Co-Chair Bangs asked why we cannot do that for diversity as well. Mr. Suhr stated we could make those calls. However, because of the way planting goes, the evidence for a need for that is not always clear. Many residents call and desire species specific information. We direct them to local nurseries, the Morton Arboretum website and other ways to do their own research. Co-Chair Bangs stated we could put something together for residents. There was further discussion about how the Tree Commission can accommodate a resource like this for the residents.

Commissioner Duerr stated we could assert a lot more control. Mr. Suhr explained the letter process and that it has not been an issue until now that we have such a large number of trees to remove and replace. This has nothing to do with the 50/50 Parkway Addition program. Commissioner Duerr stated we could add discretionary language to letters now to state “planted as available and appropriate” for resident’s requests. Co-Chair Ziegler requested vote to take it to Council. Mr. Suhr did not think that would be necessary to take it to Council. Mr. Suhr suggested the next step to all of this is to come up with a process.

Commissioner Duerr moved to add discretionary language to the letters being sent to the homeowners for replacement of trees, second by Co-Chair Ziegler.

Voice Vote: In Favor: all; Nays: None. Absent: Pam Otto; Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Suhr stated that would help our program.

Commissioner Myer expressed she likes the idea of an explanation of trees for residents. Discussion pursued as to where they could find catalogs or information. Co-Chair Ziegler mentioned the Mid-Am Show for growers and nurseries for free catalogs. He stated the Tree Commission should all go to that in January, 2013. Commissioner Duerr stated that this fits nicely into a City Forestry Plan.

C. Langum Woods Clean Up.

Commissioner Otto not present, tabled for this session.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee:

Commissioner Myer brought the Morton Arboretum news and stated we are allowed to use the information they provide. They have short articles that may help for the residents or Den writings.

B. Publicity Committee:

Commissioner Blaine stated she has nothing for this meeting.

C. Arbor Day Committee: None

8. Communications

A. Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports

June through August, 2012 Communications-Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports were presented.

Motion by Commissioner Myer second by Commissioner Duerr to place June through August, 2012 Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Commissioner Otto

- Motion carried at 8:10 p.m.

9. Comments

A. Commissioners:

Commissioner Duerr: Glad to be on the board.

Commissioner Myer: Joint meeting is October 9th, 2012. She gave a handout of how to get to the Hickory Knolls Nature Center. Co-Chair Bangs also provided a map to hand out.

Commissioner Myer stated that there is not a speaker yet; however, last time a joint meeting happened they spent the time discussing what each City is doing with regards to EAB. That discussion was very powerful. We will be meeting with Batavia and possibly Geneva. Co-Chair Bangs requested help with an agenda by Public Services staff.

Commissioner Blaine: She attended an American Walnut Council in early July in Urbana, IL. It was a good conference and she was interested in the issue of “1,000 Cankers Disease” for Walnut trees. There is a “Big Tree Registry” contest to find the biggest tree of any species. There will be a program in Kane County regarding this registry to provide a protocol and teaching others about trees. The program will be a three hour workshop in March, 2013 through the Forest Preserve. It will be held at the LeRoy Oaks Forest Preserve Creek Bend Nature Center.

Co-Chair Ziegler: Welcome to Commissioner Duerr, Marcelline and Chris. It is great to see more faces around the table.

Commissioner Zavitz: None

Co-Chair Bangs: Does the City purchase a Christmas tree for the plaza outside the Municipal building? Mr. Suhr stated we have purchased a beautiful fake one. Co-Chair Bangs stated he is glad to have the new people here.

Commissioner Grathoff: Thanks to Mr. Suhr for getting the Plan in motion. He would like to move forward on the Plan and to have something for the residents.

B. Staff :

Mr. Suhr: Thanks for the comments.

Mr. Adesso: Thank you for the welcome and glad to be here.

Ms. Wang: Very grateful for the attention to how things happen with residents and I would like to see something regarding the types of trees for residents as well.

Ms. D'Argento: None

10. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Blaine Seconded by Commissioner Myers to adjourn meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Pam Otto
-Motion carried.

/nmw