

MINUTES
October 2, 2013
BATAVIA TREE COMMISSION

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Commission and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

1. Meeting Called To Order

Chairman Scott Haines called the joint meeting with the St. Charles Tree Commission to order at 5:00 p.m. at Pal Joey's Restaurant, located at 31 N. River St. in Batavia, Illinois.

Members Present: Commissioners Scott Haines, John Dillon (5:15), Dr. Bill Whiteside, Kevin Summers; and City Arborist Frank Saupp

Members Absent: Commissioners Gary Holm and Bob Lootens

Others Present: Subcommittee members John Higgins and Kathy Vranek; Mary Jordan, Batavia resident; and Kathy Montanari, Recording Secretary

St. Charles Tree

Commission: Bill Bangs, Jon Duerr, Ralph Grathoff, Suzi Myers, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz, and Ron Ziegler

St. Charles Staff: Chris Adesso, Public Services Manager

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To accept the meeting minutes from June 5, 2013

Maker: Dillon

Second: Summers

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent

Minutes placed on file and to be sent to City Council for acceptance

3. Discussion

a. Topics of Mutual Interest Including Emerald Ash Borer

Commissioners discussed some of the issues that communities are facing with parkway maple trees. Recent mild winters have caused freeze cracks in the trunks, which weakens the structure of the trees. Members of the St. Charles Tree Commission (STC) indicated that they are discouraging residents from planting maples.

The City of Batavia has removed about 1,400 parkway ash trees thus far due to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. About 100 – 150 parkway ash trees are being treated privately by residents at their own cost.

Adesso reported that St. Charles has used contractors to remove city-owned ash trees. Initially, the removals were done by in-house staff. Three years ago St. Charles passed a \$3 million bond issue for the removal of 1,000 trees that would be replaced on a one-on-one basis. About 2,800

trees have been removed with only 700-800 ash trees remaining in public ROW and other publicly owned property. St. Charles residents are given the option of upsizing the replacement parkway tree for a fee (if available). Approximately 800 trees will be planted in the spring and 820 will be done in the fall. Stump removal and cleanup is done in house. An arborist assists with choosing the trees to ensure a diversity of species. Graf Tree Care has performed a tree study for the city in which they conduct a site analysis and produce a planting list, all tied into St. Charles' GIS data. All replacement trees are obtained from nurseries within a 200-mile radius of St. Charles. Haines noted that Batavia participates in the Suburban Tree Consortium, and trees are purchased from Wilson Nurseries, Hinsdale Nurseries, Possibility Place, and Beaver Creek. Trees were also purchased from Kendall Hill Nursery.

Haines asked about the progress being made on the grant that St. Charles received. Adesso replied that the Legacy program began with the treatment of about 150 trees; there are 78 remaining trees. The product used was Safari. Commissioner Bangs commented that there are about five times the number of ash trees on private property as on public property. Vranek reported that the company she works for treats about 600 trees in the Tri-Cities area.

Haines then explained a recent amendment to Batavia's Forestry Ordinance. Staff used to become involved in private tree matters, spending a significant amount of time and effort. The remaining cases have been coming to a conclusion and now staff intervenes only when a tree issue affects public ROW or electric wires.

Resident Mary Jordan informed everyone that there is a mill in Batavia that will process ash wood. She felt it would be helpful to publicize this information. Haines noted that he had already processed 6-7 large logs for future use.

Vranek asked if St. Charles had ever considered a tree preservation ordinance, and Adesso was not aware of this being done. Commissioner Myers said that this issue was brought up several years ago, but the City Council felt that private property tree issues should be left up to individual homeowners. Unless public property is affected, the City does not get involved with these issues. Vranek noted that Geneva has a good ordinance that doesn't interfere with private parcels. A tree preservation plan is required as part of the development permit process. Adesso said that St. Charles has similar language in its development ordinance but there isn't a requirement for other removals. Myers added that can be very difficult to enforce. Haines commented that frequently lots have already been cleared by the time plans are submitted. This was also discussed in Batavia in past years but found to be invasive. Vranek suggested that perhaps an ordinance could require a developer who removes a tree to replant in a public place.

Haines explained that there is currently a plan being brought forth by the school district for athletic field improvements. The plan isn't funded at this time but would require the elimination of the Batavia Arboretum, which has 31 trees. Higgins mentioned that he will try to get a list of tree dedications from a contact he has at Batavia High School.

St. Charles Tree Commissioners then told the group about this year's Arbor Day celebration at Richmond School. Fourth graders participated in the care of a newly planted oak tree.

Haines described a program that Batavia started a few years ago. Acorns were collected from historic trees in town and given to Possibility Place, a specialty oak nursery, to grow over one hundred trees.

4. Walking Tour of N. River St. Streetscape Improvements

Haines led the group in a tour of the River Street Woonerf, which was completed during the past year. The street was reconstructed using a European curbless concept and the addition of various amenities such as planters and benches. Planting soil vaults were used in the planter areas to allow for better root growth of the street trees.

5. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Saupp and seconded by Dillon to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by
Kathy Montanari