

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RON ZIEGLER, INTERIM CHAIRMAN
MAY 8, 2014**

Members Present: Valerie Blaine, Jon Duerr, Ralph Grathoff, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Pam Otto, Caroline Wilfong, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent: Phil Zavitz

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Isabel Soderlind

Visitors Present: Kevin Riordan, Carol Riordan

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Comm. Ziegler at 7:09 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of Visitors - Comments and Concerns:

Carol and Kevin Riordan were introduced. Kevin stated he had moved to the area a few years back and had been interested in joining the committee for a while now. He was impressed by the city's parkway tree program and its management of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) issue. Carol, his mother, will be moving to St. Charles in a few weeks. Her father was a forest ranger years ago in Cascade, Idaho. With her family history, she has always been very passionate about trees.

Interim Chair. Ziegler gave the Riordan's an overview of the committee, its intent and purpose. He reviewed the process in which commissioners are appointed to the committee.

4. Minutes Review and Approval

- A. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the April 10, 2014 Tree Commission meeting.
Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Duerr to accept and place the minutes on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Phil Zavitz, Raymond Hauser
- Motion carried at 7:14 pm.

- B. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the July 11, 2013 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Duerr, second by Comm. Blaine to accept and place the minutes on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Phil Zavitz, Raymond Hauser
- Motion carried at 7:15 pm.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion on City Forestry Plan/Ordinance

Comm. Blaine stated that she had emailed Ms. Wang the "History of St. Charles Trees" to include in the Urban Forestry Plan back in April. The information included a history of St. Charles and a brief definition of urban forestry. Not knowing that Ms. Wang had left her position, she has not had a chance to re-email the information to Ms. Soderlind before this meeting.

In addition, Comm. Otto indicated she had emailed some information regarding the Tree Commission's involvement in Langum Woods to include in the plan.

Both Comm. Blaine and Comm. Otto will resend this information to Ms. Soderlind before the next meeting. She will include it in the next meeting's packet for discussion.

Comm. Myers mentioned she found an article on the Tree Commission dating back to 1998, when the commission was organized. She would like to include a list all appointed commissioners in the plan.

Ms. Soderlind will research her records and assist Comm. Myers with historical list of appointed commissioners.

Mr. Adesso felt the committee's focus regarding the historical portion of the urban forestry plan was moving in the right direction. He reported some money was available in the FY14/15 budget to develop the technical section of the plan. Mr. Adesso has a meeting scheduled with Phil Graf regarding some city work, but with the commission's permission wanted to share the Urban Forestry outline with Mr. Graf. It is his hope that Phil Graf might be able to guide the commission with the more technical side of the plan. Mr. Adesso will invite Mr. Graf to the July Tree Commission meeting to discuss his view and perspective of the plan.

Comm. Duerr asked if this plan was necessary to meet the Tree City USA requirements. Mr. Adesso indicated the City has met all the criteria for Tree City USA this year and anticipates that the city will meet the criteria next year. Interim Chair. Ziegler indicated the Urban Forestry Plan is part of the Commission's intent and purpose as stated in the City's Advisory Board and Commission Manual.

Mr. Adesso mentioned that the City also qualified for the Growth Award this year. This award is based on expanding the tree program. To qualify the City has to spend more monies in trees than it had in previous years. With the three million dollar bond spent on the EAB program and the conclusion of the bond monies, the City most likely won't qualify for the award next year.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Mr. Adesso indicated Public Services will be inspecting the remaining 441 ash trees later this spring. Once inventoried, the staff will prioritize the removal of the trees by their condition. This year's budget includes the removal and replacement of approximately 125 ash trees per year for the next three years. These monies are no longer budgeted from the bond, but from the Public Services budget. Mr. Adesso will report on the progress of these trees at future committee meetings.

In addition, Mr. Adesso indicated the City may continue to treat some of the trees through the Legacy treatment program; others may continue to be treated privately, by residents or homeowner associations. Chemical treatments and their effectiveness continues to vary.

B. News or Concerns from Public Works

Mr. Adesso invited the commissioners to stop by and view one of the most "significant" elm trees in the city. The tree is located on S. 2nd Street between Bowman and Mosedale on the west side of the street. The elm is in good condition and recently trimmed due its proximity to the electric lines. The tree will also be treated for the Dutch Elm disease as a preventative measure. It is an amazing tree!

C. Langum Woods Clean Up:

Comm. Otto indicated the Langum Woods Clean Up was postponed until the fall due to a scheduling conflict with the school district. She will follow up this coming fall with Laura Franklin at Haines Middle School. Plant rescue and clearing will be the focus of the cleanup.

Mr. Adesso indicated there may be tentative plans to inspect Langum and Riverside Park. Species control and categorization of trees may be included as part of the master plan. Since Langum Woods is one of the City's last owned woods, he will get a recommendation on how we can move forward on this initiative.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee:

Comm. Myers is working on gathering information for teachers and school libraries.

B. Publicity Committee:

This chair is currently open. This committee is responsible for writing tree related and Arbor Day publicity articles for the Den and/or the City's website.

C. Arbor Day Committee:

This year's Arbor Day was a great success. The weather was perfect for the event and there was great community participation. As always, the music augmented the festivities. Engaging the students at Munhall School was a great draw to the event. Comm. Otto indicated Mrs. Tieche was grateful to involve her students in the Arbor Day celebration. Comm. Wilfong indicated the teachers at Davis School also appeared to be interested in participating again next year.

Areas to consider when planning for next year's event:

- Begin discussion with the individual schools starting in the fall; engage teachers and students early in the planning stages of Arbor Day. As a committee, try to elicit student presentations from both Davis School and Munhall. Explore the possibility of alternating presentations from each of the schools every other year.
- Begin the search for a Boy Scout, Cub Scout, Girl Scouts or 4H troop in the fall or early winter for the Presentation of Colors.
- Engage teachers to join Arbor Day. Comm. Otto indicated the focus should be on the 4th grade classes, as it is part of the curriculum. Currently, 10 out of 12 schools conduct forestry ecology programs.
- The distribution of the tree cookies needs to be more systematized. Attaching a sticker or writing "St. Charles Arbor Day 2015" on each of the tree cookies would make them memorable.

8. Communications

A. Electric /Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports

Motion to accept and place on file the Electric Division/Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports for March 1, 2014 to April 30, 2014. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Otto to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Phil Zavitz, Raymond Hauser
- Motion carried at 7:55 pm.

B. Review of the Tree Species Requests Report

Mr. Adesso explained species requests have been limited. With the City's initiative to diversify its urban forestry, requests are no longer taken from residents. There will be 636 trees planted this spring with an additional 400+ ash tree replacements already planned for the fall; this will complete the EAB replanting program.

9. Elections

A. Election of Chairman

While this was not listed on the agenda, May was the designated month for committee chair nominations and election. Interim Chair. Ziegler asked if there was anyone interested in the position. No one volunteered. Interim Chair. Ziegler indicated the committee was moving towards some great initiatives and he would consider remaining as chairman of the committee.

Motion was made by Comm. Blaine second by Comm. Grathoff to nominate and accept Interim Chair. Ziegler as chairman of the Tree Commission for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

- Motion carried at 7:58 pm.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Zavitz, Ray Hauser - Motion carried.

Chair. Zielger indicated one of the commissioners would be stepping down from the commission in the near future henceforth there may be a vacancy soon. Once the vacancy was announced, if Mr. Riordan was interested, he could submit a letter directly to the mayor. Upon the mayor's approval, he would be appointed at one of the City Council meetings.

Chair. Ziegler thanked all the committee members for their dedication and commitment to serve on this committee.

10. Additional Items – Comments

A. Visitors:

Kevin Riordan: Mr. Riordan indicated that he wanted to contribute and fulfill his civic duty; he was and very interested to be part of this committee in the future.

Carol Riordan: Ms. Riordan asked if there were any programs in which people could commemorate a tree to a loved one. She felt these types of programs not only commemorated those we loved, but they were also an asset to the community and environment. Both Comm. Otto (with the St. Charles Park District) and Comm. Blaine (with the Forest Preserve) work for organizations that have these types of programs.

Ms. Riordan stated she loves trees, "They are the king of the forest." She explained that there were many interesting things about trees, "The more you know about them the more you appreciate them. They are magnificent things."

B. Commissioners:

Comm. Myers: The comment from Ms. Riordan regarding commemorative trees reminded Comm. Myers of the tree dedicated to Jim Driessen. She recently drove by the tree and reported that it was thriving and looking very healthy.

Comm. Otto: Comm. Otto read the thank you note to Mrs. Tieche, which she wrote on behalf of the committee.

Comm. Blaine: Stated that she was on the committee because she too loves trees. She indicated education is important. She pointed out areas, such as the prairie heritage, are just as important as areas populated by trees. "Diversity is good and nature balances these things for a reason."

Comm. Wilfong: Pointed out that Arbor Day marked her first anniversary with the Tree Commission. She was grateful to be part of this group and for all that she has learned this past year. She stated that she has been in the United States since 1999, but just became a United States citizen last year. Being on this committee was her way of fulfilling her civic duty.

Comm. Grathoff: Commented that Arbor Day was great and for some reason it felt very special this year. He appreciated all the effort getting all the teachers involved this year.

Chair. Ziegler: Acknowledged Comm. Wilfong's comments and her strong commitment to participate and serve the community.

C. Staff:

Mr. Adesso: None

Ms. Soderlind: None

11. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Myers to adjourn meeting, second by Comm. Blaine.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Phil Zavitz, Raymond Hauser
- Motion carried at 8:12 pm.