

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
TREE COMMISSION MEETING  
RON ZIEGLER, CHAIRMAN  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2014**

**Members Present:** Jon Duerr, Ralph Grathoff, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Pam Otto,  
Ron Ziegler

**Members Absent:** Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

**Others Present:** Tony Bellafiore, Isabel Soderlind

**Visitors Present:** None

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was convened by Comm. Ziegler at 7:10 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Introductions of Visitors - Comments and Concerns:**

**4. Minutes Review and Approval**

Motion by Comm. Duerr, seconded by Comm. Myers to accept and place on file minutes of the Tree Commission meeting held on July 10, 2014.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

- Motion carried at 7:13 p.m.

**5. Old Business**

**A. Funding of the Urban Management Forestry Plan**

Mr. Adesso indicated monies were available in the current fiscal budget to commence Phase I of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP). Since Phil Graf from Graf Tree Care outlined the UFMP process at the last Tree Commission meeting, Mr. Adesso requested the endorsement and approval to initiate Phase I of the Urban Forestry Management Plan by Graf Tree Care from the Tree Commission.

Motion by Comm. Duerr, seconded by Ray Hauser to retain and approve the services of Graf Tree Care for Phase I of the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

- Motion carried at 7:16 p.m.

Mr. Adesso will sign off on the proposal and create the purchase order for Phase I of the UFMP. He will invite Mr. Graf or one of his representatives to attend the November Tree Commission meeting and discuss Phase I in more detail.

*Comm. Ziegler asked if Mr. Graf could continue to attend the Tree Commission meetings as we go through Phase I.*

Mr. Adesso indicated that he will speak with Phil Graf to determine if he or Steve Lane would be available to attend the meetings on an ongoing basis. Tony Bellafiore indicated he would coordinate with Graf Tree Care.

**B. Tree Inventory Data Collection and Conversion to GIS**

Mr. Adesso clarified the City currently uses both Geographic Information System (GIS) and an Access database program called TreeKeeper. At this point in time, each program has different functions; GIS recalls tree information but the database and management of that inventory is still held in TreeKeeper.

Mr. Adesso added that the City is currently exploring a city-wide work order system. At this time, Mr. Adesso recommended that the City continue to utilize the TreeKeeper program until the future work order system was determined and assessed.

**C. Discuss the Tree Commission's Role in the Urban Management Forestry Plan**

Mr. Adesso explained that the role of the Tree Commission continues to be the same as it has been all these years. As a portion of the 12.20.050 Ordinance states: *"The Tree Commission, with the assistance of the Public Works Department and City Arborist, shall develop, and each subsequent year, update the urban Forestry plan."*

Mr. Adesso indicated that moving forward the role of the Tree Commission was to provide the leadership and guidance to the staff and the City's consulting arborist. The Commission would need to place their stamp of approval on the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) once it is developed. This document would then need to be "molded", finalized and endorsed by the Tree Commission before it could be presented to Council.

Chair. Ziegler stated he did not feel qualified to create and write an UFMP; he would prefer Graf Tree Care create the plan under the guidance of the Public Works. The Tree Commission would then review the draft, make suggestions and endorse it once it was acceptable.

**6. New Business**

**A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer**

Mr. Bellafiore indicated the City was in the final stages of EAB. Out of the 396 remaining parkway ash trees, approximately 155 are scheduled to be removed this fiscal year. All of the standing ash trees were inspected earlier this summer. A handful of these trees however were re-inspected recently since some residents continued to be committed to treating these trees. Overall, most of these trees were assessed to be in "fair" condition. All of the trees removed this fall will be replanted in the spring.

Based on the allocated funds in this fiscal year's budget, the department is attempting to remove all the ash trees that are categorized as being in the "worst" condition (Category #1) and most of those that are in "poor" condition (Category #2). Those that are considered "fair" to "good" (Category #3 & #4) will remain standing for another year. All the standing ash trees will then be re-inspected again next year.

*Chair. Ziegler asked if there were any particular type of ash tree that seem more resistant to the EAB.*

Mr. Adesso mentioned that most of the trees categorized as "3" and "4" have been white ash trees. Most of them appeared to thrive during the height of the infestation but Mr. Adesso has noticed that they are starting to decline.

Comm. Grathoff stated that he has lost rows of white ash trees; the green ash may have been more susceptible initially but it has also affected the white ash.

*In regards to the City's tree diversity program, Chair. Ziegler asked how many different varieties had the City planted this year.*

Mr. Adesso and Mr. Bellafiore mentioned that the City will be planting approximately 330 trees; there will be ten different species planted this fall.

*Chair. Ziegler also asked the City's role and stance regarding the removal of ash trees on private property.*

Mr. Adesso indicated that the City would not be involved with any tree that fell on private property, unless it had to intercept to protect the health and safety of the public.

*Chair. Ziegler asked if the Tree Commission should make residents aware of these hazardous dead trees on private property. Does the property owner have the responsibility of removing these trees?*

Comm. Hauser indicated that he has removed several trees on his property just for that reason. Homeowners will most likely be responsible and liable for any damage caused by these falling trees located on private property.

#### **B. News and Concerns from Public Works**

Mr. Adesso indicated the department has been very active pruning trees. With the EAB residual work declining (grinding and restoration work), crews have been able to focus on trimming trees. Several commissioners noticed all the recent pruning on Prairie Street. Mr. Bellafiore added that the staff has also trimmed the trees on Fox Chase Boulevard from Dunham to Stonehedge, both sides of the road and the median. The in-house crews have also been working along Keim Trail.

Chair. Ziegler commended the Public Works staff for all the work they are undertaking on expanding the city's tree diversity, pruning and improving the overall quality of the city's urban forestry.

#### **C. Lignum Woods Clean Up:**

Comm. Otto spoke with Haines Middle School and their focus this year are grade level field trips. Overall this would mean approximately 375 middle school children involved; this may be too large of a group to manage.

Instead of the middle school participating in this project, Comm. Otto would like to contact Mrs. Tieche to see if the Munhall School 4<sup>th</sup> grade class would be interested in participating in the clean-up project. Comm. Otto felt this project would coincide with their Forest Ecology Unit this fall and the group size would be manageable.

If Munhall expressed an interest, next steps would include the following: (1) the St. Charles Park District Restoration Manager would review the site with Chris Adesso or Tony Bellafiore; (2) the children would be involved in invasive removal, plant rescue (if applicable for this time of the season), trail chipping and brush stacking. The tasks would rotate through the various groups in 1-1/2 to 2 hour increments.

Comm. Otto will contact Mrs. Tieche via email to see if the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Munhall would be interested in participating. In addition, she will contact Isabel once she hears from Mrs. Tieche.

**D. Annual Joint Tree Commission Meeting with Batavia and Geneva**

Every October a joint Tree Commission meeting has been held between the Tri-Cities, Batavia, St. Charles and Geneva's Natural Resource Committee. It is an opportunity for the Tri-Cities to share tree initiatives and impacts within the Fox Valley area. This year it is St. Charles Tree Commission's turn to host the October joint meeting.

Commissioners agreed that we should move forward in conducting a joint meet sometime in October.

Isabel will contact Kathy Montanari regarding Batavia's Tree Commission interest and availability to meet. Chris Adesso will contact Geneva's Natural Resource Committee to see if they would be interested in attending. Location and time of a joint October meeting will be set once the commissioners are polled for their availability.

**7. Committee Reports**

**A. Education Committee**

Comm. Myers circulated a copy of a children's book called, "*Why Would Anyone Cut a Tree Down?*" She added that the Tree Commission's emphasis has been to save trees, but sometimes people don't realize that in order to reduce tree hazards, protect other trees, or to get wood, it is necessary to cut trees. The book offers an educational opportunity and raise awareness of this issue. It also features tips for planting a tree.

The 41-page paperback book, written by Roberta Burzynski and illustrated by Juliette Watts, is published by the U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. It features 28 full-color, hand-painted illustrations and intended primarily for elementary school age children, as well as parents and educators. There is an accompanying curriculum for teachers with four lessons. The teacher's guide has 20 websites as additional resources.

Comm. Myers recommended the Tree Commission purchase 12 books to donate to each of the elementary school libraries in District 303. The books cost \$10 a piece either in hardcopy or electronic format and available through the USADA Forest Services website, [www.na.fs.fed.us](http://www.na.fs.fed.us).

Comm. Otto mentioned that some of the teachers may prefer the electronic .pdf form of the book. Comm. Otto offered to contact Mrs. Tieche to see which option teachers would prefer.

Mr. Adesso indicated monies were available in the Arbor Day budget to purchase the books. He suggested Comm. Myers purchase the books online and submit the receipt to Public Works for reimbursement.

Motion by Comm. Duerr, seconded by Comm. Hauser to purchase up to 12 copies (or up to \$120 worth of the books) of "*Why Would Anyone Cut a Tree Down?*", either hard copy or digital form.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

**B. Publicity Committee**

This chair is currently open and there was a brief discussion regarding the need for a chair of the publicity committee. Traditionally the Public Works staff has included an educational or publicity tree article in the City's monthly publication of The Den. Topics have covered spring and fall planting, watering your tree, Arbor Day, taking care of your newly planted tree, proper mulching, etc.

Comm. Myers encouraged each commissioner to volunteer and write one tree related article for the year. The article would then be submitted and printed in the monthly Den. Article topics may include the following: reminder that parkway property is city property, call the City to trim or inspect your parkway tree, tree diversity, maintaining your own private trees, etc.

Comm. Myers recommended Isabel create a signup sheet with some article topics and have the commissioners sign-up to write one article. The article would be due by the 2nd Monday of the month.

**C. Arbor Day Committee**

Comm. Otto stated that Mrs. Tieche is interested in participating in the Arbor Day event again next year. Mrs. Tieche would like to include the whole 4<sup>th</sup> grade level at Munhall School for this upcoming Arbor Day event. Mrs. Tieche requested a confirmation as soon as possible so she can begin planning. Discussion.

Comm. Otto will contact Mrs. Tieche letting her know the Tree Commission welcomes the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to plan an activity or program for 2015 Arbor Day event.

**8. Communications**

**A. Electric Division Tree Activity Reports**

Motion by Comm. Myers, seconded by Comm. Otto to accept and place on file the Electric Division/Public Tree Activity Reports from July 1, 2014 to August 31, 2014, as presented.

**Voice vote:** unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

- Motion carried at 8:25 pm.

**B. Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports**

Motion by Comm. Myers, seconded by Comm. Otto to accept and place on file the Public Services Division/Public Tree Activity Reports from July 1, 2014 to August 31, 2014, as presented.

**Voice vote:** unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz

- Motion carried at 8:29 pm.

**9. Additional Items – Comments**

**A. Commissioners:**

**Chair. Ziegler:** Thanked the commissioners for attending the meeting and their continued efforts.

**Comm. Myers:** Thanked the City staff who responded quickly to a safety concern regarding one of her parkway trees. The tree was inspected, she was notified of the inspection results via mail and the tree removed within a few weeks of her call. The process appeared to work efficiently and effectively. Thank you.

**Comm. Grathoff:** Appreciates that the City and the Commission will be moving forward on the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

**Comm. Houser:** No comments.

**Comm. Duerr:** No comments

**Comm. Otto:** Asked if anyone had heard or seen from Comm. Zavitz. Chair. Ziegler indicated that he would call and touch base with Comm. Zavitz before the next meeting.

**B. Staff:**

**Chris Adesso:** None

**Tony Bellafiore:** None

**10. Adjournment**

Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Otto to adjourn the meeting.

**Voice vote:** unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong, Phil Zavitz  
- Motion carried at 8:34 pm.

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