



AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Tree Commission Minutes – Information only

Presenter: Peter Suhr

Please check appropriate box:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Government Operations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government Services 02.23.15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning & Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	City Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Estimated Cost:	N/A	Budgeted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X
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If NO, please explain how item will be funded:

Executive Summary:

A duty of the Tree Commission is to advise and consult with the Government Services Committee. September and October 2014 Joint Tree Commission meeting minutes are attached.

Attachments: *(please list)*

Tree Commission Minutes – September and October 2014 meeting minutes

Recommendation / Suggested Action *(briefly explain):*

For information only.

For office use only: Agenda Item Number: 3.b

**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 4th 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 4th 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.

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 4th 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 4th 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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**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
JOINT TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RON ZIEGLER, CHAIRMAN
October 15, 2014**

Please note: These minutes are a summary of statements made at the meeting; it is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the entire discussion.

St. Charles Tree Commission Present: Chair. Ron Ziegler, Ralph Grathoff, Raymond Hauser, Suzi Myers, Pam Otto, Valerie Blaine, Caroline Wilfong

Batavia Tree Commission Present: Chair. Scott Haines, Robert Lootens, Kevin Summers, Kathy Vranek, Frank Saupp

Geneva's Natural Resource Committee Members Present: Chair. Jay Womack, Jeanine McMillen

City of St. Charles Staff Present: Chris Adesso, Isabel Soderlind

Visitors Present: None

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Comm. Ziegler at 6:55 p.m.

2. Introduction and Welcome:

Chair. Ziegler introduced himself and welcomed all of the committee members to the annual Joint Tree Commission meeting between Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles. Chair. Ziegler made general remarks, reviewed the purpose of the meeting and gave an overview of the evening's agenda.

3. Discussion Topics:

A. Budgeting Challenges within each of the Communities

Geneva's Natural Resources Committee: Jay Womack, the committee's chair, indicated their group's initiative is being "green". This committee has raised funds to purchase parkway trees after approximately 2,800 ash trees were removed in the City of Geneva. The group is comprised of volunteers that raise money to purchase replacement trees. Their committee receives approximately \$500 per year from the City of Geneva to conduct fund raisers. To date they have purchased approximately \$10,000 worth of trees for Geneva's downtown area.

Two different fund raisers have been very successful for this committee, "Rain Barrels on Parade" and "Wine, Cheese & Trees". The events include music, food, drinks and silent auction. Local Geneva businesses have been very supportive donating services and items for the events. Their proceeds have yielded approximately \$8,000 the first year and approximately \$16,000 the following year. Now that the Geneva's downtown core is populated, the committee is considering a parkway tree lottery system for residents "in need" or seniors that live in Geneva.

Mr. Womack mentioned that the City of Geneva now has a 50/50 Tree Program for residents.

City of Batavia: Scott Haines, from the City of Batavia, indicated that the EAB hit Batavia in 2007-2008. At that time, they had approximately 2,600 to 2,800 parkway ash trees. Today they are down to approximately 500 parkway ash trees to be removed. Some of trees still standing are being treated by residents.

Batavia's tree budget was increased during the EAB infestation, but is now reduced. The reduction in the budget has impacted routine maintenance tree work in particular maintenance pruning. City crews have been able to prune from the ground, but the city may require a contractor to prune the taller and larger trees.

This year, the City of Batavia is recommending a full city tree survey. The last survey was conducted in 1997 and it is outdated. Their recommendation is to update the tree inventory in GIS; the program will manage the infrastructure and maintenance of trees.

As for replanting, Batavia has a 50/50 Tree Planting Program. Trees are small in scale but the city has recently offered larger options to residents.

City of St. Charles: Mr. Adesso indicated the City of St. Charles is in a similar circumstance as Batavia but began with a population of approximately 7,000 parkway ash trees. Chris Adesso indicated the City Council has had a tremendous amount of respect for the city's Tree Commission and their recommendations. The city was fortunate and took the initiative to pass a \$3,000,000 bond to deal with the removal and replanting of ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. The bond is now complete and as of this summer had approximately 400 remaining ash trees remaining for removal. The rest of these trees will be removed and replanted through the general fund monies as they become available in the budget.

The City's tree general fund is not as robust as it has in past years. The city will need to address maintenance issues, the remainder of the EAB removals and replants, updating of the tree inventory and begin the process of creating an Urban Forestry Management Plan. Graf Tree Care has been budgeted to assist with this effort this year.

B. Tree Initiatives Endorsement from Public Officials

The 50/50 Tree Program is now available to residents in all three cities.

Mr. Adesso indicated the City of St. Charles has been fortunate and able to plant one tree for each removed. In addition, the city has had had approximately 150 residents participate in 50/50 Program every year. For those trees that were ordered but were not able to be replanted at the same site, due to utility lines, etc., have been planted in areas adjacent to city property.

Batavia has started to plant some trees outside the Right-of-Ways i.e., around retention ponds, as well as high profile areas that have become barren from the removals.

C. Tree Issues

- i. Several different pests have been noted in all three cities. Several commissioners have read articles documenting maples being attacked by a borer. Blue spruces are being attacked by a fungus called instant needle browning. Kathy Vranek read that the EAB has jumped to other species of trees, such as the White Fringe tree which is native to the eastern United States. Overall, pests will continue to be a constant challenge in the future.

Scott Haines indicated that Batavia's Tree Commission developed an approved planting list due to issues with particular species, e.g., flowering crabs and pear trees.

Kathy Vranek indicated that Geneva has a nice list of approved tree species on their website. It is a great resource.

ii. Vandalism

All three cities have had to deal with tree vandalism in particularly vehicle accidents. In a case where a parkway tree has been hit by a vehicle, the ticketed motorist is billed for the damage or its replacement.

Kathy Vranek also mentioned the vandalism caused by homeowners pruning the parkway trees as well as improper mulching.

All three cities have noted the increase of improper mulching which kills the tree. Volcano mulching appears to be done by landscapers and homeowners. Each city has had their challenges in dealing with this issue. Several ideas were discussed to increase the public awareness on proper mulching:

1. Leaving door hangers on the proper care and mulching of parkway tree when it is planted. (Please contact the City of St. Charles for a copy of the door hanger.)
2. Place a push pin with a label on those trees that have been improperly mulched.
3. Include an article and diagram on the proper mulching technique in the city's monthly newsletter.
4. Distribute flyers and promote proper mulching at Arbor Day.

D. Other:

Kathy Vranek wanted to recognize a committee of women in Batavia called "Value Our Trees". This group of women saved a local arboretum in Batavia. The site was being considered for an athletic sports field.

Jeanine McMillen suggested all three cities, local park districts and forest preserves promote the planting of a tree to commemorate a loved one that has passed away, "In memory of a loved one."

Suzi Myers suggested the cities be more proactive in re-utilizing the wood of dead trees, i.e., "adaptive reuse of trees". As an example, the Kane County Farm Bureau on Randall Road carved a dead ash tree into an ear of corn sculpture. Comm. Myers suggested those in attendance stop by and take a look at it.

Jeanine McMillen also reminded everyone to attend and support Geneva's "Wine, Cheese and Trees" event planned for March 22, 2015.

4. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by Chair. Ron Ziegler at 7:55 p.m.