

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RON ZIEGLER, CHAIRMAN
MARCH 12, 2015**

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Chris Adesso, Tony Bellafiore, AJ Reineking, Isabel Soderlind

Visitors Present: None

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Ziegler at 7:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of New Commissioner

Chair. Ziegler introduced Carol Riordan to the Tree Commission. Carol was appointed to the Committee at the March 2, 2015, City Council meeting. Chair Ziegler welcomed Carol to the committee.

Comm. Riordan mentioned that she attended last May's Tree Commission meeting last with her son Kevin. She had expressed an interest and a passion for trees at that meeting since her stepfather had been a forester and owned a tree farm. She recently moved to St. Charles and is pleased to that she can serve as a civic volunteer on this committee.

4. Minutes Review and Approval

A. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the January 22, 2015, Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second Comm. Blaine to accept and place the minutes on file.

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

- Motion carried at 7:06 p.m.

5. Old Business

A. Urban Forest Management Plan Update

Mr. Bellafiore stated that the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) draft is coming along. Phil Graf, the City's certified arborist consultant, was hired to write Phase I of the plan last fall and will present the draft at the April 9th Tree Commission meeting. Mr. Graf is making headway on the draft and has some great ideas for the commissioners to consider.

Mr. Adesso mentioned, as the UFMP develops, the Tree Commission may eventually need to be engaged in the review and modifications of the Tree and Shrub ordinances. Mr. Graf has found the current Tree and Shrub Ordinance may need to be updated and/or revised. The current ordinances has specific species restrictions and the Commission may want to consider revising the ordinance. For example, Mr. Graf has mentioned planting Black Locust on the south side of West Main Street was a great option for this highly salted and extensively shaded zone. Per Phil Graf, the Black Locust would make a great streetscape tree in this particular area since it is resistant to salt and shade.

Comm. Duerr mentioned that Black Locust are difficult to maintain and thorny, but a seedless cultivar maybe a good option. Mr. Adesso added that the City tries to plant as many native species as possible, but at times some species have their challenges; therefore some non-native species are being planted.

Comm. Riordan asked what initiatives the City was taking in regards to species diversification.
Mr. Adesso indicated Phil Graf, a certified arborist, was hired to work on a tree diversity plan. He typically inspects the proposed planting sites each season and considers the best spatial and species candidates with diversity in mind. Now that most of the affected ash trees have been removed, species specific requests from residents have been infrequent.

6. New Business

A. Tree Removals and Tree Planting

The Public Services division has received the species list for the Spring Planting season. Two-hundred and six (206) trees will be planted this spring. Pedersen will be supplying the trees, which are ordered from a 200 mile radius.

Mr. Graf will be monitoring the planting process. He will be checking the planting specifications during and after the planting is completed.

B. News and Concerns from Public Works

Mr. Adesso requested the Commissioners pass the word to residents regarding watering the newly planted trees. Last year the City lost quite a few trees due to the fact that they were not being watered. Gator bags will be provided for each newly planted tree; instructions on watering and caring for the tree will be left on the door of the homeowner that lives on the property adjacent to the tree. This year the City plans to utilize its resources to spot check watering and educating residents.

Comm. Ziegler also added that mulching the area around the tree also make a big difference.

Comm. Riordan also mentioned the effects of not watering are typically seen the following year.

C. Reorganization of the Tree Commission Discussion

As Mr. Adesso mentioned at the last meeting, other cities and towns are remodeling their commission to include a broader scope of natural resources, a Natural Resources Commission. The focus then would not only include forestry, but also invasive species issues, bio-swales, water conservation, and overall protecting the City's environment and natural resources.

Mr. Adesso added that he has introduced this idea to the Peter Suhr, Director of Public Works, but it has yet to be presented to the mayor or the city administrator. If the Commission is interested in moving forward with this new structure, it will need to be presented it in writing. This document will then be introduced to the mayor and the city administrator. Mr. Adesso recommended the commissioners take a look at the Village of Highland Park website and their Natural Resources Commission "work plan".

Comm. Blaine stated that bio-swales and water are other natural resources issues. She was aware infiltration swales and bio-swales in the right-of-way were being utilized in other communities. She mentioned that she was in favors the idea, but would prefer conducting some more research before making a final decision.

Comm. Duerr has noticed the bio-swales when he has been visiting out in Oregon. It appears to be functioning well, but he felt there may be some conflicts not only with the citizenry but also the City's engineering staff since they are not as keen on biological solutions to these issues. He also sees salting as an issue.

Mr. Adesso indicated that he has had conversations with the City's engineers and they are both open to the concept. In addition, salting could also be another area the commission can help develop through the Natural Resources Committee. He did mention that the City has already been focusing on a salting conservation plan and a "sensible salting" program, centering on liquid brine.

Comm. Wilfong asked if the commission would be allowed to broaden its members.

Mr. Adesso mentioned this concept has not been introduced to the mayor. The concept and plan will need to be put in writing by the commissioners and then the document and concept would be introduced to the mayor.

Comm. Wilfong also asked if this would impact our Tree City USA award in any way and if there would be any financial impacts on this committee?

This would not impact our Tree City USA award as long as forestry was still an emphasis of the committee. Per Chris Adesso, he did not see this impacting the committee in any way financially.

Comm. Myers recommended that if the committee was to broaden its scope to include other natural resources issues, the committee should meet at least once a month. She also recommended that the current commissioners conduct their own research in the next four weeks and discuss this again at the April meeting. She added if anyone had a great interest, to put a rough draft together and present it at the April meeting; it could then be discussed and reviewed at the next meeting and voted on in May.

Comm. Riordan also asked if the City utilized any community service or restitution groups to offset some of the cost incurred by "projects" that needed to be conducted around town.

Mr. Adesso indicated that we currently had two City employees that manage a community restitution group. The group has been instrumental and a tremendous asset in completing tasks for the City.

D. Langum Park Clean Up

Comm. Otto stated that she had approximately 35 volunteers attending the Langum Woods Clean Up on Saturday, March 14 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. There would be approximately 18 boy scouts from Troop #5, with approximately 1 adult per every 5 scouts. There were also 4 community volunteers that had signed up from the press release issued and 1 high school student.

Comm. Otto requested the commissioners oversee the children utilizing the loppers, hauling and stacking during the event. Comm. Otto utilizes this as an educational opportunity for the kids as well as the adults. She reviews safety which includes the appropriate PPE, how to utilize the loppers, what to remove, and the ecological advantages of maintaining the woods, not only for the trees but also the wildlife that live in them. Trailing and chipping will be conducted at another time.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee:

Isabel Soderlind indicated that she has ordered 12 books, "Why Would Anyone Cut A Tree Down?" by Roberta Burzynski. The books however are back ordered and may not arrive for another 30 to 60 days. One book will be donated to each of the local schools when they arrive.

B. Publicity Committee:

Comm. Wilfong ordered 2000 free pamphlets on "How to Plant Trees", from the Arbor Day Foundation. She mentioned that these could be handed out at Arbor Day and placed in the school lobbies advertising Arbor Day. She will look into ordering a stamp stating, "City of St. Charles Tree Commission – Arbor Day", so all the brochures could be stamped.

C. Arbor Day

The Committee reviewed the 2015 Arbor Day Checklist:

Arbor Day is scheduled for 4:00 PM, Friday, April 24, 2015.

Lincoln Park has been reserved through the Park District from 2:00 to 6:00 PM.

Item To Accomplish	Delegated To	Completed	Comments/Notes
Renting of the Tent	Ms. Soderlind	2/25/15	PO# 83046 created
Presentation of Colors:	Comm. Otto	3/14/15	Confirmed Boy Scout Troop #5 will present the colors

Item To Accomplish	Delegated To	Completed	Comments/Notes
Contact Potential Speakers	N/A	No speaker	Determined no speaker was needed with the School District Program
Contact Ms. Tieche at Munhall School	Comm. Otto		Re: Type of presentation and speaker system needs
Order Speaker system	Bellafiore/Whittaker	Confirmed	Date reserved with RJ Recording
Tree Demonstration	Comm. Grathoff	Confirmed	Contact Chris Scott
Entertainment/Music	Comm. Myers	Confirmed	Contact Rick Weals & Russ Altersohn will provide musical entertainment
Tree Raffle	Tony Bellafiore		Order Tree to Raffle
Prepare Programs and Invitations	Ms. Soderlind		Have not started
Purchase Cookies	Ms. Soderlind		
Set up of Tables/Chairs/Podium	Tony Bellafiore		
Tribute to Trees – Update Website/Den Article	Ms. Soderlind	Completed	Press release sent out in March. Article was included in the March Den. Website Updated.
Interactive Children’s Activity	Comm. Otto Comm. Blaine Tony Bellafiore Comm. Myers		Leaf Rubbings/Leaf Stamps/Bark Rubbings Twigs Tree Cookie to count rings Need crayons Recycled paper
Planting of Tree on Arbor Day	Tony Bellafiore		Lincoln Park Parkway Determine space Order tree/Pedersen

8. Communications

A. Public Services and Electric Division Tree Activity Reports

Motion to accept and place on file the Electric Division/Public Services Tree Activity Reports for January 2015 and February 2015. Motion by Comm. Duerr, second by Comm. Myers to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

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

- Motion carried at 8:20 pm.

9. Additional Items – Comments

A. Commissioners:

Comm. Blaine: Reminded everyone of the Maple Sugaring Days this coming weekend, March 14 and March 15 from 1 to 4 p.m. at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve on Dean Street.

Comm. Otto: Recommended that the committee consider a small “gift” to present to Mrs. Tieche for her participation in Arbor Day again this year. Last year the Tree Commission presented a tree to Munhall School as a gift.

Comm. Grathoff: Welcomed Carol Riordan to the commission.

Comm. Myers: Indicated that she was very excited about Arbor Day.

Comm. Hauser: Mentioned the great article in the local Tribune for Geneva’s fund raiser. The article was substantive, a great way to publicize their organization.

Comm. Wilfong: Indicated she would stamp all the “Plant Trees for America” brochures she ordered from the Arbor Day Foundation and drop them off by the Public Works Facility.

Chair. Ziegler: Comm. Ziegler thanked everyone for participating in tonight's meeting and he was looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting, April 9.

B. City Staff:

Tony Bellafiore: Stated the trees along Roosevelt Street are being trimmed. In addition, the trees starting from Route 31 going west and from Horne to Gray Street were also being trimmed.

Chris Adesso: Reminded the commissioners of Geneva's Natural Resources Committee fund raiser "Wine, Cheese and Trees" event on March 21, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Persinger Recreation Center on Peck Road. The proceeds from the event will go towards supporting trees for the City of Geneva.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Comm. Otto to adjourn meeting, second by Comm. Grathoff.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None
- Motion carried at 8:34 p.m.

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