

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TREE COMMISSION MEETING
RON ZIEGLER, CHAIRMAN
MAY 14, 2015**

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

Members Absent: Jon Duerr

Others Present: Chris Adesso, AJ Reineking, Isabel Soderlind

Visitors Present: Alderman Maureen Lewis

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of Visitors

A. City's America in Bloom Initiative

Chair. Ziegler introduced Aldr. Maureen Lewis. Aldr. Lewis currently represents the 5th Ward, located on the southwest quadrant of city, and she stated how much she appreciated all the effort the Tree Commissioners put towards protecting the City's trees.

Aldr. Lewis attended this meeting to discuss the City's new initiative America in Bloom, also referred to "AIB". AIB is a national awards program which promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants and trees and making other environmental and lifestyle enhancements thus fostering a better quality of life through the community. The winner of the recognition award will be announced in September.

From July 12-14, two program judges will be in St. Charles touring and judging the city on in several different categories: floral displays, landscaped areas, heritage preservation, urban forestry, environmental efforts, in addition to the overall community impression. Aldr. Lewis, Steve Amatangelo and Diane Cullen are the Steering Committee members of this project and they have recruited several representatives from the community to volunteer in this effort.

Aldr. Lewis was present to encourage the Tree Commissioners to participate in this effort:

1. Volunteer: The AIB Committee needs the expertise of the Tree Commissioners regarding the city's urban forest, wooded areas, urban forestry volunteer programs, the City's tree diversity program and the efforts being placed on creating the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Some of this information has been included in the Urban Forestry section of the [St. Charles in Bloom Community Profile](#) that was written and submitted to AIB. This document may be found on the City's website.
2. Recommendations: If any of the commissioners had any suggestions or recommendations of unique urban forestry programs or areas located here in the city, please contact Chris Adesso or Aldr. Lewis.
3. Assist in Beautifying the City: Pink, purple, white and yellow have been chosen as the colors for the program's plantings. Consider these colors as you plant your spring flowers and be a part of the effort.

4. Spread the AIB Word: Speak to your neighbors and friends that live in St. Charles. Plant a container of flowers in the AIB palette, assist with tidying up your yards and streets, assist in making the entire city looking beautiful.

The commissioners offered a few items the AIB Committee may want to consider in the Urban Forestry tour:

1. Several wooded areas can be included in the tour: Norris Woods, Delnor Woods, Hickory Knolls Woods, and Lee Roy Oaks.
2. Large oak trees located in the city:
 - a. 1230 Ash Street – on the corner of Fellows and Ash Street. The oak is estimated to be approximately 400 years old.
 - b. St. Mary's Park also has a grand oak tree that can be pointed out.
3. Frank Saupp would be great resource regarding the trees in the city.

4. Minutes Review and Approval

- A. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the April 9, 2015 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second Comm. Grathoff to accept and place the minutes on file.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Duerr

- Motion carried at 7:34 p.m.

5. Old Business

A. Urban Forest Management Plan Update

AJ Reineking, Public Works Manager, met with Graf Tree Care and reviewed the Urban Forestry Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as "UFMP") outline, which was discussed at the last meeting. A draft of the plan will be reviewed by Public Works and presented to the Tree Commissioners at the July Tree Commission meeting. A purchase order has been written for Phase 3 of the Urban Forestry Management Plan; therefore the plan will continue to move forward in FY15/16.

B. Reorganization of the Tree Commission

Due to the time constraints of the meeting, Chris Adesso recommended this agenda item be postponed to the July meeting. Commissioners agreed and moved to the next agenda item.

6. New Business

A. News and Concerns from Public Works

Chris Adesso invited the Tree Commissioners to an upcoming St. Charles Active River Project meeting, Wednesday, May 20 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center located at 3795 Campton Hills Road. The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles has created a task force and is requesting the community to participate in a workshop to share their thoughts and suggestions regarding improvements along the Fox River Corridor in St. Charles

The River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles commissioned a team of experts to engage the community and update the 2002 River Corridor Plan. The intent is to identify potential infrastructure and program changes within and adjacent to the Fox River that may leverage the river as an active community asset, by improving the recreational, ecological and economic impact of the river. Per Chris Adesso, having the presence of the Tree Commission at the meeting would be an asset at the meeting and the community. He hoped that some of the commissioners would be able to attend.

Tree Trimming Update: The Public Services Urban Forestry crews are focusing on trimming trees in the southwest quadrant of town. DeMar Tree & Landscape Services will be focusing on trimming parkway trees along the electrical lines and Skyline Tree Service and Landscaping will focus all other parkway trees. For the next week both contractors will be working from S. 7th to 13th Avenue raising

the canopy of the trees. Once this has been completed, the contractors will be moving to the southwest quadrant of town.

Chair. Ziegler asked if Public Works had consulted with Phil Graf regarding the optimal time to trim. Mr. Reineking stated that EAB has put the staff behind on the trimming schedule and the staff is very sensitive to proper seasonal trimming. The staff however is currently receiving 20-30 requests from residents per week. Mr. Adesso mentioned that a position was open for a Public Services Crew Leader; they hope to hire or promote someone with a forestry background. The department anticipates developing this person as the City Arborist in the future.

Spring Tree Planting Update: There are approximately 170 trees in the ground and the program will be wrapping up soon. The trees were purchased, by Pedersen, within the radius required around the city; the trees purchased focused on the tree diversity recommendations made by Graf Tree Care.

B. Morton Arboretum Study

Comm. Blaine found the attached article and requested that it be shared with the Tree Commissioners. This study conducted by the Morton Arboretum revealed how concerned Chicagoland residents feel now that its trees are under threat and likely to be destroyed by the emerald ash borer beetle. There were several key findings to the study e.g., “a green neighborhood is an ideal neighborhood”, “tree loss has an emotional impact”, and “the benefits of trees and the importance of ‘tree diversity’ ”. It also included five easy ways residents can champion trees in their city. These include watering trees along the street or parkway, protecting the tree bark, watching out for roots, correct mulching and choosing the right tree for the right location. Comm. Blaine found the article very interesting and reflective of the St. Charles community.

C. Annual Nominations for Chair and Election of Chairman

Chair. Ziegler announced that he was resigning as chair, but would continue as a member of the committee moving forward. He has enjoyed his tenure as Chair and hoped his position made a positive impact on the committee. Chair. Ziegler opened the floor for nominations.

Motion was made by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Otto to nominate Ralph Grathoff as chairman of the Tree Commission for Fiscal Year 2015-2016.

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

- Motion carried at 7:56 p.m.

Comm. Grathoff was voted as Chair of the Tree Commission at 7:56 p.m. and continued the meeting as Chair of the Tree Commission

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee:

Comm. Myers asked for an update on the books ordered back in February, “Why Would Anyone Cut a Tree Down?” by Roberta Burzynski. Ms. Soderlind was unable to call again this past month, but will follow up on the status of the order by the next meeting.

B. Publicity Committee: None

C. Arbor Day

The Commissioners felt this year’s Arbor Day went well. The event had approximately 50 to 75 people in attendance due largely to the participation of Mrs. Tieche 4th grade students from Munhall School and St. Charles Boy Scout Troop #500.

Area to Improve on Next Year:

- Comm. Blaine suggested an announcement be made regarding all the children's activities being offered at the event. This can include: the leaf rubbing activity, counting the tree rings, tree climbing activity, cookies, etc.
- Announcement thanking all those that participated and donated items for the event e.g., Mrs. Tieche for the children's program, Pedersen for the donation of the Arbor Day tree, Midwest Groundcovers for donating perennials, etc.
- Consider moving the Arbor Day event to a different park every year. The program agenda can include the significance of each park. Locations to consider in the future St. Mary's Park & Belgium Town Park located on N. 9th Street, north of Dean Street could be considered in the future.

8. Communications

A. Electric Division Tree Activity Reports

Motion to accept and place on file the Public Services and Electric Services Tree Activity Reports for April, 2015. Motion by Comm. Blaine, second by Comm. Ziegler to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Duerr

- Motion carried at 8:10 p.m.

9. Additional Items – Comments

A. Commissioners: Comm. Myers: None

Comm. Otto: Voiced her concern regarding all the volcano mulching that is occurring throughout the community. It appears this is a very sensitive issue for those who are aware of improper mulching technique. She recently published an article on mulching and received numerous positive comments from the community championing her awareness effort. Comm. Otto requested the Tree Commission rally with other communities, other organizations, etc., publicizing the perils of volcano mulching. It was recommended that this topic be discussed in further detail and placed on the agenda at a future meeting.

Comm. Hauser: None

Comm. Ziegler: Thanked the Commission for their support the last couple of years. He felt the Commission will be in good hands with Ralph Grathoff as the newly appointed Chair of the Committee.

Comm. Riordan: None

Comm. Blaine: None

Comm. Wilfong: Thanked Comm. Myers for speaking to three classes at Davis School during Arbor Day.

Chair. Grathoff: Mentioned that the improper "volcano" mulching word has started to spread. One of his customers was making sure that his crews would not be "volcano" mulching his trees.

B. City Staff:

Chris Adesso: Mr. Adesso made the commissioners aware of a recent planting issue on Winners Cup Circle where an ash tree was removed last fall. The resident requested a new tree be planted on the same site as the ash tree. Due to the proximity of the driveway, the placement of an existing young maple tree near the site and the underground utility infrastructure in the parkway, this site was determined to be an "unsuitable" for a re-planting. The area was inspected by several

managers; all agreed that the planting of a tree in this area was not viable. The homeowners living adjacent to the site were contesting the decision not to replant. The residents were invited to attend today's Tree Commission meeting to voice their concerns and request the support of the Tree Commission. Since they were not in attendance, staff outlined the situation on their behalf.

Upon further explanation and discussion, the Tree Commission realized the Public Works department made the most suitable choice not to replant; with time the maple tree on the parkway would fill in the area in the parkway. As Mr. Adesso explained, in the future, these types of "best practice" policies will be documented in writing in the UFMP; City policies will be clearly stated for all.

AJ Reineking: None

10. Adjournment

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

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: Comm. Duerr
- Motion carried at 8:22 p.m.

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NEW STUDY FROM THE MORTON ARBORETUM REVEALS CHICAGOANS' TAKE ON TREES

- As Chicago-area tree canopy shrinks, new survey finds majority of Chicagoans concerned about region's tree loss, yet unsure how to help trees in their neighborhoods -

LISLE, Illinois (April 28, 2015) – Chicago and its seven surrounding counties have more than 150 million trees—trees that make our communities healthier, more sustainable and more beautiful. Yet Chicago-area trees are under threat, with one of every five [i]<file:///Y:/Media%20Relations/Press%20Releases/Sent%20Releases%202015/ARBOR%20DAY%202015%20press%20materials/Tree%20Poll%20Release%20FINAL.docx#_edn1> parkway trees likely to soon be destroyed by the emerald ash borer beetle.

At this tree “tipping point,” Chicago-area residents are concerned, as evidenced by a new survey commissioned by The Morton Arboretum. The Lisle-based tree-focused institution’s Talking Trees survey reveals just how much Chicago-area residents care about our trees and the future of our urban forest—the trees that live alongside people in our city and suburbs.

Key findings include:

- * A green neighborhood is an ideal neighborhood. Two-thirds of those surveyed place top importance on trees when deciding where they want to live, saying they would “never live in a neighborhood without trees.”
- * Tree loss has an emotional impact. 60% of Chicago-area residents say they are concerned with the loss of trees in their city, while nearly half are specifically aware of the emerald ash borer beetle.
- * We know our cities’ trees need human help to thrive, yet aren’t sure how to help them. Eight of 10 Chicagoans believe that our trees need human help to thrive, which is especially true in our populated cities, where trees undergo extra stress living alongside people and cars, as well as in smaller spaces. Yet, while 65% agree that the trees where they live need to be checked regularly for pests and diseases, only 41% know that our area’s trees need help getting enough water, and even fewer (36%) are aware that trees need mulch to thrive in cities.
- * Chicago-area residents understand some of the benefits of trees. Most Chicagoans know that trees clean our air (86%), and “make me healthier” (66%). But only about half know that they have an impact on flooding (49%), and only slightly more know that trees increase a home’s value (56%), and protect against climate change (57%).
- * We understand the concept of “tree diversity” and its importance in the future of our cities.

The best defense against future tree pests is to plant a wide variety of trees—and nearly three-fourths of those surveyed agree! According to the Arboretum’s experts, the best defense against major tree loss is to plant a varied selection of trees.

Trees Under Threat

An estimated 10,000 tree species are threatened worldwide, trees that support ecosystems around the world. Yet, compared to threatened animals like the panda bear or bald eagle, trees receive much less awareness. In fact, only 3 in 10 Chicagoans can name an endangered or threatened tree, while nearly 6 of 10 Chicagoans can name an endangered animal.

Chicago’s Trees Need Champions

Now more than ever, every tree needs a champion, especially those that live in urban areas. Facing compacted soils, artificial surfaces, summer heat, and physical damage to limbs and roots, our urban trees need human intervention to live. Meanwhile, people—quite literally—cannot live without trees and the myriad benefits they provide. This why the Chicago region’s urban forest needs planning, management and care.

The Morton Arboretum’s arborists, horticulturists, researchers and teams of volunteers work diligently to protect and conserve the trees that make our cities so beautiful, dealing daily with issues like the emerald ash borer and fungal diseases that are decimating much of the Chicago-area treescape. But every Chicagoan can do his or her part to help our area’s trees thrive.

Here are five easy ways residents can champion trees in their city:

1. Water trees along the street. Trees near the street add hugely to the beauty and character of your neighborhood and increase your property values. Trees like long, slow drinks so leave the hose, barely dribbling, at the base of the tree for an hour or more. Or use a soaker hose.
2. Protect tree bark. A tree’s outer and inner bark help guard against damage by weather, insects, animals, and organisms that can cause disease. Their bark is easily hurt if it is struck by lawnmowers and string trimmers. Be careful not to damage them when mowing and edging. Don’t chain bikes to trees or drill to hang swings.
3. Watch out for roots. In confined areas, some trees’ roots are forced to the surface of the soil. Avoid mowing over those roots; damaging them can cut off the flow of water and nutrients.
4. Mulch right. Mulch, wood chips or shredded bark placed over a tree’s roots, does a lot to help trees, keeping tree roots cooler and healthier in summer and preventing water from evaporating so tree roots can use it. Spread mulch in a wide, even, flat layer about 3 to 4 inches deep around the base of a tree. Don’t pile it against the trunk in the shape of a volcano; it can trap moisture that causes rot or harbors insects and diseases.
5. Choose the right tree for the right location. Different kinds of trees need different conditions. Before you embark on planting a tree, make sure it is the right size and that you can give it the

sun, shade and soil it needs to thrive in your yard. The Arboretum's Plant Clinic<<http://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-advice/plant-clinic>> can help.

For more tips and ways residents can champion trees in their neighborhoods and cities, visit www.mortonarb.org/championoftrees<<http://www.mortonarb.org/championoftrees>>.

About The Morton Arboretum

Established in 1922, The Morton Arboretum is an internationally recognized outdoor tree museum and tree research center located in Lisle, Illinois. As the champion of trees, The Arboretum is committed to scientifically-informed action, both locally and globally, and encouraging the planting and conservation of trees for a greener, healthier, more beautiful world. On 1,700 acres are 220,000 plant specimens representing 4,100 different kinds of plants, along with specialty gardens, educational exhibits, the award-winning Children's Garden, 16 miles of hiking trails and the Visitor Center, featuring The Arboretum Store and the Ginkgo Restaurant and Café. The Morton Arboretum is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization, welcoming more than 932,000 visitors and serving 39,250 member households in 2014. Learn more at www.mortonarb.org<<http://www.mortonarb.org>>.

Methodological Notes

The Morton Arboretum's survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 500 Chicago-DMA resident adults aged 18+, between March 23 and March 30, 2015, using an email invitation and online survey. Quotas have been set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the Chicago-DMA adult population 18 and older.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of that variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews conducted. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the results that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. Complete survey results are available.

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