

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
TREE COMMISSION MEETING  
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2015**

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** AJ Reineking, Isabel Soderlind

**Visitors Present:** Phil Graf, Steve Lane, Kirk Miller

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

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:02 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Introductions of Visitors**

Phil Graf and Steve Lane from Graf Tree Care attended the meeting to present the first draft of the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Kirk Miller is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Lincoln School. Mr. Miller mentioned the 4<sup>th</sup> grade science curriculum included a forestry unit this year. His interest was to learn more about the City's urban forest and the Tree Commission.

**4. Minutes Review and Approval**

- A. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the July 9, 2015 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Blaine, second Comm. Riordan to accept and place the minutes on file.

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

- Motion carried at 7:04 p.m.

**5. Old Business**

**A. Urban Forestry Management Plan (Draft) presented by Phil Graf and Steve Lane from Graf Tree Care**

Phil Graf and Steve Lane from Graf Tree Care were present at the meeting to review the first draft of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "UFMP" or "Plan") with the Tree Commissioners. They were there to receive feedback and direction and address any questions or concerns the Commissioners may have regarding the Plan.

Mr. Graf mentioned the document was a collaborative effort utilizing the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and Municipal Guidelines as resources. The current draft of the Plan is broken into 10 different sections and outlines the goals the City should achieve by the year 2040. The Plan is broken in to the following sections:

Section 1: Statement Mission and Goals

Section 2: Definitions/Normative References

Section 3: State of the Urban Forest in St. Charles

Section 4: Key Personnel and Capacity

Section 5: Tree Removal  
Section 6: Tree Pruning and Standard Maintenance  
Section 7: Tree Planting  
Section 8: Tree Inspections & Risk Management  
Section 9: Tree Preservation and Management during Construction  
Section 10 Long Term Forestry Goals

Mr. Graf and Mr. Lane reviewed of the various sections of the document and answered questions from the Commissioners. They requested the Commissioners take their time and study the document carefully; any comments, questions, changes, edit requests, please contact Andrew Reineking directly.

## **B. Reorganization of the Tree Commission**

The Commission resumed their discussion regarding its reorganization to a Natural Resource Committee from previous months. Chair. Grathoff shared several mission statements from local Natural Resources Committees around the Chicagoland area. Several of the examples were one sentence in length, very similar to the following statement:

“The Natural Resources Committee seeks to preserve, enhance, manage and protect the city’s environment.”

After the last meeting, Chair. Grathoff was under the impression that the Committee was in agreement to move towards a Natural Resource Committee, but was uncertain on the next steps. *Would the Committee need to draft a mission statement and then proceed with changing the City of St. Charles Code Book regarding the Tree Commission 12.20.040 and 12.20.050?*

Mr. Reineking indicated that Mr. Adesso needed a mission statement or letter of intent from the Commissioners to present to the mayor and city administrator. Chris Adesso wanted to receive the mayor and city administrator’s feedback before proceeding with this initiative. The statements presented seemed to be on the right track, but a letter from Chair. Grathoff would deem to be appropriate. There most likely be a modification to the Ordinance that would eventually need approval from Council.

*Comm. Wilfong was interested in knowing how the duties of this committee would change? As a Natural Resources Committee the scope of the committee would broaden to other areas than just trees. Several examples were given by the various commissioners: encouraging bioswales, protecting the riverbank, the utilization of street salt and the impact on the parkway trees, etc.*

*Comm. Ziegler felt the Committee should take a step back and fully understand the direction and responsibilities of the Natural Resources Commission. He felt that he would like to better understand the specific role and responsibilities of this new committee before moving forward. What will be required of this Committee? What would be the direction of this committee?*

Mr. Reineking indicated the direction and scope of the Natural Resources Committee would be defined by this committee.

Comm. Riordan stated her passion and interest was trees and her preference was to remain focused on trees. She would prefer to continue to focus and use the City’s resources on urban forestry and trees.

Comm. Myers indicated one of the impacts on this committee would be the commitment of a monthly meeting, versus every-other month. Broadening the scope of this committee may also attract more visitors and residents that may have other environmental interests. She felt that the Commission should be proactive and broaden to consider the city’s overall environment, trees and the environment that impact trees.

Discussion amongst the Commissioners took place regarding the formation of the Natural Resource Committee. At the end of the discussion, Comm. Ziegler proposed that the Committee take a vote at the November meeting, Natural Resource Committee or Tree Commission.

In the meantime, Chair. Grathoff will work on a mission statement and present that at the next meeting if the vote leans toward the formation of a Natural Resource Committee.

## 6. New Business

### A. News and Concerns from Public Works

- i. **Tree Trimming and Removal Update:** AJ Reineking indicated the remaining 216 remaining ash trees were inventoried; fifty-four of the trees were in poor condition and slated to be removed this fall. Most of the trees being removed are likely to be replanted next spring.
- ii. **Fall Planting Updated:** The Tree Planting program is under way with a new contractor, St. Aubin Nursery. The City is keeping the “20-10-5” rule in mind therefore there is a very diverse list that will be planted this fall and next spring.

### B. Joint Tree Commission Meeting with Batavia and Geneva’s Natural Resource Committee.

The Batavia Tree Commission will be hosting the Joint Tree Commission Meeting between Batavia, St. Charles and Geneva’s Natural Resources Committee. The meeting is set for Wednesday, October 14 at 5:30 p.m. The agenda will include a short walking tour of the Riverwalk area, a light meal followed by an open discussion. The meeting will be held at Peg Bond Center, located on the Batavia Riverwalk just west of Batavia City Hall, 100 N. Island Avenue, Batavia.

It appeared that most of the Commissioners were available to attend. Isabel Soderlind will reply to Kathy Montanari and accept the invitation on behalf of the Commissioners.

## 7. Committee Reports

**A. Education Committee:** Comm. Wilfong indicated she and Comm. Myers will be representing the Tree Commission at the Lincoln School Wellness Fair. It will be held September 17, between 6:00-8:00 p.m. She currently gathering some materials to hand-out to the children and parents that night. Comm. Otto will also be attending but representing the St. Charles Park District at the event. She plans to have a poison ivy display and handouts.

**B. Publicity Committee:** None

**C. Arbor Day:** None

## 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 July and August of 2015. Motion by Comm. Duerr, second by Comm. Blaine to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

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

- Motion carried at 8:25 p.m.

## 9. Additional Items – Comments

### A. Commissioners:

**Comm. Riordan:** None

**Comm. Hauser:** Brought in a Chicago Tribune article titled “The Planet has Trillions More Trees than Previously Thought.” The planet now has more than three trillion trees, up from 400 billion previously estimated. However the study also found there are 46% fewer trees on the Earth than there were before humans started the process of deforestation. According to the article 15 billion trees have been lost every year due to humans and other causes, such as wildfires and pest outbreaks; only five billion may grow back each year, so the net loss is ten billion annually.

**Comm. Myers:** Comm. Myer mentioned Jim Driessen. Mr. Driessen is now deceased, but at one time had been one of the chairs of the Tree Commission. She mentioned that he would be very pleased with the progress made on the Urban Forestry Management Plan and the Tree Commission.

**Comm. Blaine:** National Public Lands Day is scheduled for Saturday September 26 from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. This is America’s largest single-day volunteer event to improve public lands. Everyone is welcome to come out and help plant oak trees. It will be held at Creek Bend portion of Leroy Oaks.

In addition, October has been designated as “Oaktober”. A series of programs, focusing on oaks, are planned for the month of October. The Commissioners may be interested in attending the oak ecology and restoration presentation scheduled for October 10. Please contact Comm. Blaine if anyone is interested in attending or needs further information.

**Comm. Otto:** None

**Comm. Wilfong:** Thanked Graf Tree Care for their hard work on the Urban Forestry Management Plan and for Mr. Miller attending the meeting.

**Comm. Duerr:** None

**Comm. Ziegler:** None

**Chair. Grathoff:** Mentioned the UFMP draft presented tonight is a huge step forward for the Tree Commission.

**B. Visitors:**

**Mr. Miller:** Mr. Miller appreciated the opportunity to sit in and listen to the discussion. He was unaware of all the work that goes into maintaining the trees in St. Charles. He appreciated all the knowledge he acquired at this meeting and how valuable it will be when he teaches the Forestry science unit to his students.

**Steve Lane:** Stated he is looking forward to the Commissioner’s feedback on the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

**C. City Staff:**

**AJ Reineking:** None

**10. Adjournment**

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

**Voice vote:** unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None  
- Motion carried at 8:35 p.m.