



AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Tree Commission Minutes – Information only

Presenter: AJ Reineking

Please check appropriate box:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government Operations	X	Government Services 01.25.16
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning & Development		City Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Hearing		

Estimated Cost:	N/A	Budgeted:	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	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 2015 and December 2015 Tree Commission meeting minutes are attached.

Attachments: *(please list)*

- * Tree Commission Minutes – September 2015 meeting minutes.
- * Tree Commission Minutes – December 2015 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
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 4th grade teacher at Lincoln School. Mr. Miller mentioned the 4th 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.

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

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

Members Absent: None

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

Visitors Present:

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:06 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Isabel Soderlind announced that Carol Riordian had resigned from the committee. The City Administration Office had received a resignation letter and she was no longer living in St. Charles.

3. Introductions of Visitors: None

4. Minutes Review and Approval

- A. Motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the September 10, 2015 Tree Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Duerr, second Comm. Ziegler to accept and place the minutes on file.

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

- Motion carried at 7:07 p.m.

5. Old Business

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

Comm. Blaine reviewed the Urban Forestry Management Plan (hereafter referred to UFMP) draft and felt it was a very solid document. She felt however there were two distinct types of audiences to the document: (1) part of the document was geared to the general public and informative in nature; (2) the other, technical and analytical in nature with policies and procedures for the organization to follow. In order to improve the flow of the document, Comm. Blaine recommended editing the document.

AJ will make Comm. Blaine's edits to the document and then distribute to the rest of the committee members for their review. Any comments and questions from the committee members should be emailed directly to Mr. Reineking utilizing the "Track Changes" in the "Review" tab in Microsoft Word before the January 14, 2016 meeting.

The Commission felt there were a couple of portions of the document that were still incomplete. These included:

- GIS and visual drawings, etc.
- Wood utilization section

AJ Reineking explained that Graf was waiting for our feedback so they can get the 2nd and hopefully final version completed.

B. Reorganization of the Tree Commission

The Commission resumed their discussion regarding its reorganization to a Natural Resource Commission from previous months. Chair. Grathoff gave a short synopsis of this discussion from the last meeting. A few of the commissioners recommended that further discussion was needed and a vote taken. Today's discussion would include:

- (1) specific roles and responsibilities of the committee members
- (2) the modifications the committee would need to make, and
- (3) the types of initiatives or projects the committee would undertake

Chair. Grathoff distributed a copy of three different mission statements from various Natural Resources Commissions (hereafter referred to NRC). The municipalities cited only had a Natural Resources Commission or "Committee"; the responsibilities of trees continued to remain part of the NRC. These commissions were similar to the current Tree Commission; they just had a broader scope.

There were several comments made by the commissioners:

Comm. Duerr: The Natural Resources Commission would broaden the scope of this committee. It could engage them in other natural resources initiatives e.g., salting practices, soil conditions, solar panels, bioswales, natural plantings, etc. He did question whether the City would embrace the engagement of this commission in such topics.

Comm. Ziegler: The Tree Commission has been active and he felt very hesitant regarding broadening the scope of this commission. He mentioned the transition would require a commitment in time and training in various aspects of natural resources and sustainability initiatives. Being in the final stages of the UFMP, he preferred to defer this initiative until the UFMP was finalized and passed by Council. He noted the following changes will need to be considered if the committee was going to broaden its scope:

- Increase the number of commissioners
- Increase meetings from 8 to 12 times a year
- Sub-committees may need to be established to review ordinances, policies, etc.
- Demonstrate to the City that we have the manpower and the commitment to move forward as a NRC.

Comm. Hauser: Expressed that he would prefer to conclude the UFMP and then move forward with this new initiative.

Comm. Blaine: Mentioned the committee would have the potential to attract more people that have a broader interest in natural resources. Initially, the Natural Resources Commission can limit the scope of their initiatives until the UFMP is completed. Having a passion for the environment and wanting to serve the community would make a person qualified to be on this committee.

Comm. Myers: Stated most of the meetings she has recently attended have been by Natural Resource Committee members, not members from a Tree Commission. It appears this is the new model or trend utilized in other communities. She preferred the committee change its name to Natural Resources Commission, continue to focus on trees, but choose a natural resources project or initiative to focus on in the near future.

Chris Adesso mentioned the committee would need to agree on this initiative and then the concept could be presented to the Government Services Committee for feedback. The reorganization would require some work from the existing committee members, which would include minor modifications to the current ordinance. It however would broaden the scope and possibly attract more members that may have an interest in other natural resources issues beyond trees. This commission can begin on a

small scale on such items as sustainability efforts and bioswales but this will continue to be an advisory board for the City, as the Tree Commission has been.

If the committee preferred, Chris Adesso offered to present this initiative to Council at the January or February Government Services meeting. He could request feedback and recommendations from the Council members on this initiative. He would mention the Committee's interest in broadening their scope to a variety of natural resources initiatives and share the following examples of projects and initiatives:

- Woody invasive removal
- Naturalizing traditional landscapes
- Bring awareness to the public and children
- Clean up days
- Rain barrels
- Begin to change the City code from Tree Commission to Natural Resources Committee

Motion was made to have Chris Adesso present and request feedback and recommendations from Council in regards to the concept of reorganizing the Tree Commission to a Natural Resources Commission at the Government Service Committee meeting.

Motion was made by Comm. Duerr, second Comm. Ziegler. Approved by roll call vote. Motion carried.

Comm. Blaine: Yes
Comm. Duerr: Yes
Comm. Grathoff: Yes
Comm. Hauser: Yes
Comm. Myers: Yes
Comm. Otto: Yes
Comm. Wilfong: Yes
Comm. Ziegler: Yes

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:**

Tony Bellafiore mentioned trees were planted later this year, due to the mild weather. Some were pulled late and making sure that they would survive winter. All have had plenty of water and pulled burlap. They have also been wrapped with craft paper for a year which will protect them from frost cracking. The trees were mulched correctly and efficiently by the new contractor, St. Aubin; high quality mulch was utilized.
- iii. **Other:** None

7. Committee Reports

- A. **Education Committee:** None
- B. **Publicity Committee:** None

C. Arbor Day:

Isabel Soderlind had contact with Ms. Tieche from Munhall School and she expressed an interest to participate again at the next Arbor Day, April 29th.

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 September and October of 2015. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Blaine to accept and place on file the reports as presented.

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

- Motion carried at 7:59 p.m.

9. Additional Items – Comments

A. Commissioners:

Comm. Hauser: He mentioned he is always making an effort to become better informed. He recently found an article in one of the local newspapers quoting Comm. Blaine. The article focused on the dwindling number of oak trees and the efforts to save them.

Comm. Myers: She wished everyone a very happy holiday.

Comm. Blaine: One of her New Year's resolutions is to walk and observe all the trees within the neighborhoods of St. Charles.

Comm. Otto: Glad to be here.

Comm. Wilfong: Wished everyone a happy holiday.

Comm. Duerr: Mentioned he was very impressed with the tree work being done.

Comm. Ziegler: None

Chair. Grathoff: Mentioned he was very glad to see that things were moving along in regards to the Natural Resources Commission.

B. City Staff:

Tony Bellafiore: Staff continues to work on tree related maintenance.

AJ Reineking: None

Adesso: None

10. Adjournment

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

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

- Motion carried at 8:05 p.m.