

MUNICIPAL TREE COMMISSION MEETING
October 13, 2015
Department of Public Infrastructure Conference Room

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chairman Todd Holschbach, Vice Chairman Glenn Pfeffer, Mike Penckofer, , Ald. Al Schema, Nic Levendusky,

Staff Present: Dan Koski, Chad Scheinoha, Alvin Rehme

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by T. Holschbach.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2015 meeting was made by M. Penckofer and seconded by N. Levendusky. The motion carried unanimously.

Report on Tree Maintenance Since Last Meeting

Since August 11th, the tree crew worked at more than 33 locations with 28 trees being removed (18 street, 10 park trees), one callout on Summit St. where two holes were poked in a roof, and no plantings. The tree on Summit was one of the largest removed by the current Parks employees. Due to an employee injury in the division, followup on forestry requests has gotten behind. Contact has been made with approximately 80% of the people. C. Scheinoha estimated that 350 requests are received in a year. Currently, there are approximately 50 trees in the top two tiers.

Urban forestry grant opportunities

A. Rehme indicated the division was awarded \$2,500 from a Canadian National grant for tree planting. A \$3,500 grant from ATC was received previously, and they applied for another one for 2016. A 2016 WDNR Urban Forestry Grant for \$25,000 was also applied for, but that is a matching grant, which was budgeted for in 2016. Currently, more than 50% of the trees in the City are maples, and since maple decline is a concern, that was worked into the grant application. The grant would be approximately one half removals of maples that are considered 4D trees and one half planting of new trees. M. Penckofer suggested getting a copy of a grant that was approved to see what format the organizations prefer.

Update on the forestry fund

The balance of the forestry fund is \$2,262. Eight loads of firewood were delivered since August 11th.

D. Koski said that an additional \$20,000 was requested in the 2016 sidewalk budget for tree removals. Furthermore, there is a potentially an additional \$25,000 that could come out of a building maintenance fund to remove 4D trees. Last year, \$5,000 was added to the budget for removals by outside contractors. City personnel would work with outside contractors on the removals in order to remove the maximum number of trees with the money that is available.

City tree removal action plan & priority policy

This policy went to Park and Recreation Committee. At the first meeting, they had a few questions that needed to be researched. The policy was then approved at the second meeting.

Discussion & possible action on proposed assessments for tree maintenance since October 2014

This is work that City crews have done on private trees that were affecting the City right-of-way. Property owners were sent letters and given 30 days to complete the work. More than 20 letters were sent out and five property owners did not complete the work. A notice regarding a hearing for the assessments was published in the newspaper. N. Levendusky made a motion approving the assessments. M. Penckofer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & possible action on a minimum charge for forestry work performed on private properties with ordinance violations

M. Penckofer suggested a minimum charge of one hour of labor and use of the equipment. Charges for weed violations are treated like a penalty. There is a \$300 minimum charge, then if it is over one hour, there are additional charges for labor and equipment. C. Scheinoha said that at the next meeting, he would provide the hourly costs for the two forestry workers and the tree truck and chipper in order to determine a minimum charge. D. Koski suggested that we may want to make it high enough that the property owners are not going to want the City to perform the work, they will want to hire a private contractor instead. That way, the City forestry crew can spend their time concentrating on City trees. T. Holschbach suggested we may want to have another minimum increment for huge projects. This issue will be brought back at the next meeting.

Discussion & possible action on changes to the lists of suggested street trees

During the grant application process, Tracy Salisbury suggested that the City's canopy be diversified, since more than 50% of City trees are maples and more than 20% are ash trees. The Commission discussed various trees that could be added instead. M. Penckofer suggested that only specific maple trees be allowed on the recommended list. This issue will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Discussion regarding plans for Arbor Day 2016

Arbor Day is April 29, 2016. Emma Radandt Park was suggested as a possible location due to the grant to plant trees at that park. Monroe School children, those in the Southfield Townhouses, and possibly Washington Jr. High School students could be invited to participate. This issue will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Discussion & possible action regarding the 2016 meeting schedule

Due to the timeframe with assessments, the August and October meetings were changed to September and November. T. Holschbach made a motion to approve the meeting schedule with the change. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Adjournment

A motion was made by A. Schema to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by N. Levendusky. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

smsr