

Tree Commission

January 2019 Minutes

Attending: Paul Josey, Mark Rylander, Peggy Van Yahres, Rosanne Simon, Matt Brinckman, Lynn Rush, Brian Menard, Peter Russell, Roxanne White

Staff: Brian Daly, Mike Ronayne

Guests: none

December Minutes Corrections –

Brian Menard was in attendance.

Passing of Susan Weber – Brian M.

Brian M. called the Commission's attention to the passing of Susan Weber, a passionate champion of Maplewood Cemetery who inspired years of community efforts to preserve and protect this historic property and neighborhood city park, and who was recently laid to rest there. In 2000-01, she led the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association and residents of 8th St. NE in conducting a comprehensive survey of every element of the cemetery, including its trees and other plantings. A copy of this survey was presented to the Parks and Recreation Department. As the Commission develops a comprehensive plan for the trees in the city's three cemeteries, special consideration should be given to the segment of Maplewood abutting Maple St., which is sorely lacking in trees. In recognition of Sue Weber's considerable efforts, every effort should be made to plant a medium-to-large canopy close by her resting place.

Property Acquisition – Brian

Some of the property is inaccessible. It has not been determined how the property will be used.

CIP Update – Brian D.

There was a meeting last month where staff fielded questions for the Budgeting Office. There is still a \$50k item for tree planting moving forward. The funding for Active Lifecycle Management of the Mall trees was proposed but not carried forward. There is a Planning Commission public work session tonight. In early March the commission plans to send a letter of support to City Council that Roxanne will draft. The Operating Budget was submitted and is not expected to have negative impacts on operations.

CODE Discussion - Paul

There was discussion about substituting the proposed honey locusts in the Mall extended area near existing ice rink and to create an ADA accessible route. The commission will send notes/comments to NDS. Mark R. brought this issue to PLACE to improve conditions. The commission would like a more holistic approach and would like to avoid using phrases like “design change” or “redesign.”

Locust Av. Timber Trespass Law - Mike

Since these tree species were small, flowering trees that were removed there isn't really a timber market for them so the Timber Trespass law may not be appropriate here. There is nothing in the code or ordinance to address this so it becomes a civil issue. Mike pursued remediation by requesting the cost of stump grinding and the trees be replaced since they were mature, small flowering trees. If circumstances had warranted otherwise, different tree appraisal methods could be used to quantify the value of trees removed. Mike has submitted a letter requesting payment for stump grinding and tree replacement. After thirty days another letter will be sent and if there is no response still, the item will be turned over to the City Attorney's Office to seek remediation.

Elect Officers and Review Committee Structure – Paul

After some discussion it is voted that Paul will remain the Chair and Roxanne the Vice Chair. Rosanne may know someone interested in filling a member vacancy. The Planting Committee is expected to remain Peter as the Chair and Paul, Carolyn Burgess, Roxanne, Lynne, Mike and Matt as its members. The Code Committee will remain Mark, Brian M., Peggy and Mike. The Data Committee will be Peter, Peggy, Brian M. and Mike. Committees are expected to meet this month and bring their goals to the February meeting. It is discussed whether or not an outreach subcommittee would be helpful.

Urban Forestry Webpage - Mike

Mike reviews some of the content on the Urban Forestry homepage. There are some older references and there is some discussion about what is relevant, should be kept and what should be updated or changed. The tree inventory seems to not work consistently on smartphones. Staff will check on a solution. Mark volunteers to provide an outline of webpage content. Staff will see how much traffic the page actually receives. It is suggested to include a link to the tree benefits calculator from Casey Trees and the CATS Notable trees page.

Annual Calendar – Paul/All

After much discussion many things are removed and added. Mike will send Roxanne a copy of the draft for review.

Other Updates

Upcoming Development Projects that Impact Trees – Mike

The Belmont Bridge Plan 90% submittal comments are due 1/18 and the O Carlton Rd. Project comments are due 2/6. Mark and Lynne expressed interest in O Carlton Rd. Mike will request digital copies to send out. The group expressed interest in the planter widths of the Belmont Bridge project so staff will provide those plans as well.

Timeline and Process for Mall Study – Mike

Alex and Brian D. were unable to meet last month. There is no update.

2019 Urban Tree Canopy Report – Mike

The Community Forest grant for the canopy study has been historically available in June. The Virginia Trees for Clean Water grant will not be provided this year due to funding.

Urban Forest Management Plan/Natural Resources Plan –Mike

No update.

Other Items

Doug Ehman Retirement – Mike

Today Doug announced his retirement as Parks Division Manager. Doug served on the Tree Commission from 2013-2017. Doug's last day will be January 18th.

Next meeting: Standing Committee Goals, Six-month Dashboard Review (Tree data and financial data), Review Tree Commission Membership

Adjourn 6:56