

MUNICIPAL TREE COMMISSION MEETING
November 14, 2017
Department of Public Infrastructure Conference Room

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chairman Todd Holschbach, Vice Chairman Nic Levendusky, Glenn Pfeffer, Al Schema, Alder. Steve Czekala

Staff Present: Dan Koski, Chad Scheinoha, Alvin Rehme

Others: Kevin Crawford, Vayda Sonnenburg, Selena Burnett, Randal Burnett, Jenn Morris Fodden, Tony Fodden, and Ron Kossik

Call meeting to order

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

Approval of the minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2017 meeting was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Public input session

K. Crawford brought a photo of a silver maple street tree at 716 New York Avenue that the City Forestry Division is planning to remove, which K. Crawford says does not have a dead branch on it. He also gave a recap of what was happening with the tree. The City Attorney has said that if the Commission rescinds their action, then the City can go back to the original code, so K. Crawford is requesting the Commission rescind their action.

Randal Burnett is opposed to having it cut down, because it shades his home in summer, and he says the tree is beautiful.

Ron Kossik believes the historic street trees are the most striking characteristic of the area. He is requesting the Commission enforce their standards uniformly and not remove this tree.

Tony Fodden agrees that the street trees are an essential component of the neighborhood and would like to see the tree remain.

Request to appeal decision to not remove tree at 716 New York Ave. prior to sidewalk replacement

C. Scheinoha said that the correct action was not taken at the beginning of this issue. An ordinance change was made in October 2016 that does not allow appeals to be made when the City Forester makes a decision on a public tree. Appeals only apply to private property trees.

A. Schema asked if there was an issue with the tree being hit. A. Rehme indicated that there was a branch that was hit and that his recommendation had been to remove that limb only for public safety. He indicated that no one knows for sure if removing the limb will make the tree unstable and that it is possible it may become unstable if the roots were cut during sidewalk removal. This issue began when the City Sidewalk Inspector informed A. Rehme that sidewalk would need to be replaced at this location. If residents trim more than 25% of a tree, they are asked to contact the City Forester as trimming that much may possibly cause the tree to die. K. Crawford indicated that there is only one scar on the tree from being hit by a vehicle at 12' 6", and he doesn't think that the low hanging branch needs to be removed. He believes that the property owner is looking to get his sidewalk replaced for free. It was brought up that there is a tree a few

properties away that is hanging lower over the street than the one at 716 New York Avenue. S. Czekala made a motion to rescind the decision. A. Schema seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The original decision by the City Forester to leave the tree standing will remain. T. Holschbach indicated that further discussion may be warranted on the issue in a broader sense. Trimming every branch that hangs low over the street may not be the highest priority at this time.

Report on tree maintenance since last meeting

City crews have:

- Performed work at approximately 35 locations,
- Removed five trees,
- Trimmed 30 locations (some with multiple trees),
- Responded to one callout for a maple tree that fell into the street,
- Delivered 0 loads of firewood (6-10 loads are in the shop yard to be delivered),
- Planted 34 trees (32 on S 10th, such as flowering crab, ironwood, popcorn bean, etc.), and
- Reviewed five tree permit removals, including a Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry to remove 14 trees, and two planting permits.

Private contractor removals = American Transmission Corporation, through Nelson Tree Service, is removing 25 of the unhealthiest trees along their D-104 transmission lines (including some of the ash trees). They originally wanted to take down 60 trees. Trees will be trimmed on S 19th Street from the river to Columbus then east to Manitowoc Public Utilities.

Current forestry service requests for:

- 102 “4-D” trees to be removed and
- 67 trees to be trimmed.

Emerald Ash Borer has not been found on any additional trees since the original five in July.

Update on the forestry fund

The balance of the forestry fund is approximately \$9,600.

Urban forestry grant opportunities

So far this year, staff has submitted grant applications for the American Transmission Corporation and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban Forestry, which is a matching grant. The staff worked with Tracy Salisbury from the DNR when applying for the DNR grant and if it is obtained, they are looking at updating the emerald ash borer (EAB) policy, removing & replacing ash trees, treating some ash trees, obtaining the Community Tree Management Institute certification for A. Rehme, and developing a Christmas Tree Exchange Program. Dealing with EAB is one of the DNR’s top goals. T. Holschbach said that if the City receives the grant, it would be good to give media recognition to the DNR for the grant.

Tree Planting for 2017 & beyond

A. Rehme is developing a tree planting program for terrace trees. He currently has 10 locations picked out, but he would like to get a much larger list of locations.

A citizen will be donating \$3800 to have for six foot red cedar trees planted on south border of Silver Creek Park in 2018.

The details are being worked out for a Christmas Tree Exchange Program, which would be part of the DNR Urban Forestry grant. Citizens would bring in their old natural Christmas tree, and they would get a voucher for a four foot whip to be planted on private property. The DNR prefers whips to seedlings, since the mortality rate is higher for a seedling. Jeff Edgar from Silver Creek Nurseries has volunteered to be the “middle man” for this program.

Forestry Assessments

C. Scheinoha presented a list of private properties where trees were trimmed or removed, which he is requesting the Commission to recommend for assessments. A. Rehme reviewed the work that was completed on the three properties. Each of the property owners were given a minimum of 30 days to complete the work, and the work was not completed, so the Forestry Division performed the work or hired a contractor to complete the work. The minimum assessment for each incident is \$300. The Commission members approved the recommended assessments and signed the form that was passed around.

Revisions to Tree Maintenance & Removal Policy

C. Scheinoha said that part of the reason we want to review the policy is due to the sidewalk issues. This issue was tabled until the next meeting.

Commission meeting dates for 2018

A proposed meeting schedule was reviewed. Another meeting will be added after the Arbor Day Celebration. T. Holschbach made a motion to approve. A. Schema seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Adjournment

A motion was made by A. Schema to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by N. Levendusky. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.