



TREE COMMISSION MINUTES August 22, 2023

Present: Garrett Price, Mary McGrath, Christy Syfert, Polly Seum, Tim Miklasiewicz, Denton Kitts (Parks and Rec Assistant), Alistair Reynolds (ODNR Forester)

Absent: Linda Granger (Parks and Rec Director)

Visitors: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm.

Minutes from the July 25, 2023 meeting were approved with no changes.

Agenda for the meeting was approved, adding the additional topic to review Maren Reserve Landscape Plan.

Village Report

- Monday with the Mayor video was posted to the Tree Commission website; members are encouraged to view the video. Mr. Kitts to email the link after the meeting.
- Mr. Kitts met with the Tolles Agriculture department to review upcoming nature preserve project.
 - Name of preserve is being discussed and decided upon with the Parks Committee.
 - Project will begin in September with Mr. Kitts presenting the project to the students, including the goals and grant details.
 - Students will research, design, and provide ideas for trees, plants and signage.
 - Removal of invasives will begin in late September.
 - Mr. Kitts is finalizing purchase of trees for fall planting.
 - Mr. Kitts will coordinate a tour of the preserve for the members of the Tree Commission and Parks Committee.
- Mr. Kitts provided an update on the Tree Ordinance.
 - Mr. Kitts met with the Village Planner (Derek Hutchinson) and Village Administrator (Haley Lupton).
 - Feedback was provided that guidelines on licensing, subdivisions and construction are already in the village's zoning code. The zoning code is more specific.
 - Recommendations were given to write sections within the Tree Ordinance that point to the zoning code. Any changes needed to the zoning code would need to be presented to the Planning & Zoning board.
 - Mr. Kitts is meeting with Ms. Lupton and Mr. Hutchinson the week of August 28, 2023, to review their proposed changes.
 - Updates at time of minutes publishing: Mr. Kitts met with Ms. Lupton and Mr. Hutchison on August 23, 2023. Moving forward as discussed, taking out duplicative sections, defining what are public and private trees, and the responsibilities of the landowner and the village, and keeping the language the same to pass that as the replacement tree ordinance.

- Mr. Kitts will forward the updated Tree Ordinance prior to sending to Council for review. Council will review at the September 25, 2023 meeting.
- Tree Commission should work on guidelines or checklist to provide in the zoning code for new developers, including maintenance and watering, 10/20/30 rules, specific desired/undesired species and the number of desired species.
- Multiple opportunities for interaction with the village were discussed.
 - Farmers Market dates are 9/7, 9/21, and 9/28, and the market runs from 4:30pm-7pm. Tree Commission members should let Mr. Kitts know if they're able to volunteer.
 - Fall Fest event will be held on October 21st, 4-7pm. The event is October 21st, 4-7pm. The table could be set up in the trick-or-treat alley or a separate spot and pass out candy and information similar to that from the Farmers Market.

ODNR Update

- Mr. Reynolds will provide future update on the \$14M possible grant.
- The Central Ohio Urban Forestry Conference will be held on October 12 from 8:30-3:00pm. It will be at Capital University in the Koinonia Room 2199 East Main Street Bexley Ohio. The Village will cover the cost of the conference for any Tree Commission members that would like to attend.

Old Business

- Mr. Kitts provided an update on the Tree City USA application status
 - Arbor Day posted their checklist and requirements; Mr. Reynolds has a call with Arbor Day Foundation the week of August 28, 2023, to review requirements and updates.
 - Application completion to be reviewed at the next Tree Commission meeting.
 - Applications are due the first week of December 2023.
- Tree Commission website was reviewed.
 - Mr. Kitts presented an example of a "New Tree Guide" and suggested Plain City have a Tree Planning guide available on their website. Ms. Syfert and Mr. Kitts will work on developing one and will forward to members for feedback.

New Business

- September meeting will be in conjunction with the Planning and Zoning Commission on Wed. Sept 20th at 6:30pm at the Municipal Building. This will replace the regularly scheduled meeting for the month.
- Maren Reserve Landscape Plan will be presented at a future Planning and Zoning meeting.
 - Commission members reviewed the plans for tree counts.
 - Mr. Reynolds provided guidance of ensuring plans follow the 10/20/30 rule and breaking up sections of trees after they hit a count of 11.
 - Mr. Kitts will provide the final tree count to Tree Commission members, as well as recommendations to the developers on possible changes.
 - Updates at time of minutes publishing: Mr. Kitts provided an inventory of trees within the plan. Their current tree landscaping plan has a total of 1131 street and property border trees, and a total of 1448 trees through the entire development. They are only removing 23 trees in the construction of the development. The City Planner instructed Mr. Kitts that he could forward along the suggestions to include more species variety and to not group them in groups larger than 11. Mr. Kitts will provide that update to the developers.

Misc.

- Members discussed having possible shared email for Tree Commission questions.
- Mr. Kitts will create a shared online folder for submitting future landscape plans for review.
- Parks and Rec team are planning a day to drive through the village to look for possible dead trees and signs of unwanted insects.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36pm.

Future Discussion Topics

- Review completions of Tree City USA application
- Tree Ordinance approval updates from City Council
- Review of “The Spot” and Beachy Farms landscape plans
- Review and edits to Tree Owner Guide + Tree Commission Brochure