

CITY OF AURORA
TREE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 15, 2019

The Aurora Tree Commission met in a regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday, January 15, 2019, in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m. by Chairman Deborah Davis.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Deborah Davis
Laurena Entsminger
Kim Pease
Martha Sickinger
Rob Swaney
James Tomko
James Vaca Sr.

Also Present: Laura Holman, Director, Parks & Recreation
Ben Askren, Arborist
Marie Lawrie, Secretary Pro-Tem

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

MOTION: To adopt the Revised Agenda

Dr. Tomko moved; Mr. Vaca seconded, and the motion carried, on a unanimous voice vote.

ORGANIZATIONAL/ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Ms. Davis opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Dr. Tomko nominated Deborah Davis for Chairman. Ms. Entsminger seconded the nomination. Hearing no further nominations, Ms. Davis closed the nominations.

MOTION: To elect Deborah Davis as Chairman

Dr. Tomko moved; Ms. Entsminger seconded, and the motion carried, on a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Davis opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Dr. Tomko nominated Rob Swaney for Vice Chairman. Mr. Vaca seconded the nomination. Hearing nothing further, Ms. Davis closed the nominations.

MOTION: To elect Rob Swaney as Vice Chairman

Dr. Tomko moved; Mr. Vaca seconded, and the motion carried, on a unanimous voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of the October 16, 2018 meeting, as submitted

Mr. Vaca moved; Dr. Tomko seconded, and the motion carried, on a unanimous voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

Calendar Review:

- The February 19th meeting will be at City Hall
- The March 19th meeting will be at City Hall
- April 26th at 2:15pm Arbor Day will be celebrated at Leighton Elementary
- Also in April, voting on the children's projects at a location to be announced
- Updating the Landmarked Tree List may happen in April
- May 8th, 2019 Tree City will be celebrated in Brecksville
- Also in May, Landscape Awards will be awarded
- Mulching will be scheduled in May

NEW BUSINESS:

Time Change for Meetings

It was brought to the attention of the Chairman that 5:00pm may be too early for working residents to attend the meetings. It was suggested that a start time of no sooner than 5:30pm would be more appropriate.

MOTION: To change the time of the monthly meetings to 5:30pm.

Mr. Vaca moved; Ms. Pease seconded, and the motion carried, on a unanimous voice vote.

Landscape Awards

Ms. Pease gave a presentation introducing the submissions for the landscape awards. At the end of the meeting Ms. Davis returned to this topic and introduced some additional projects that have been submitted. These projects were on display at the meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Year in Review

- Davey Tree pruned all the trees in the Hawthorn Subdivision
- All of the trees at Sunny Lake were pruned
- Planted 8 commemorative trees including one for Maddie Marazzi, the Administrative Assistant who retired from Parks and Recreation
- Arbor Day was enjoyed by all
- Avon Lake hosted Tree City, in which Aurora was rated one of the best Urban Forestry programs in Northeast Ohio

- Tree Commission could apply for an award with the Society of Municipal Arborists
- 4th of July the commission hosted a booth
- Mulch day happened in May
- 50 trees were planted in the fall
- Trees were addressed that had storm damage
- Ash trees on easements were removed
- 16 more Ash trees scheduled to be removed

Arborist Report

- **Tree City** - In October, Mr. Askren submitted for Tree City and Growth Award looking to achieve Sterling status by the year 2020
- **Spring Tree Planting** - 92 trees will be planted along the streets of Villas of Bertram. Mr. Askren explained that to purchase the best quality trees, you must act quickly. He is hopeful that bidding and approval process for this project will move quickly. There was a conversation about the appropriate way to mulch trees without causing them to die. Ideas for informing the public about this problem were discussed including an article in the Aurora Advocate, a brochure was printed and available at City Hall, and a door to door campaign. A discussion ensued about the progress underway pertaining to the Preservation Ordinance. This ordinance will address clear-cutting among other things.
- **Tree Maintenance** - 166 trees 5 inches in diameter or larger along with 450 small trees will be pruned in Four Seasons, 56 trees will be pruned in Kiwanis-Moore Park, and trees at the Walker Building and the Police Department will be pruned. Trees at City Hall will be evaluated for potential disease and treated accordingly.
- **Tree Museum** - Daily visits to the tree museum occur to ensure against damage from deer
- **Inventory of Parks** - An inventory of 5 of 7 city parks has been completed, inventory will continue at Liz Strahan Park and Geauga Lake area
- **Arborist Assistant** - Emily Keller has been the Arborist Aid since December 16, 2018 and her last day will be January 31, 2019. Mr. Askren thanked her for all her hard work.
- **Budget** – There was a slight increase in the budget and a slight increase in costs for the year. The cost to plant a tree is approximately \$340.

Power Lines Meeting

Everyone was encouraged to attend the First Energy meeting on Monday, January 21, 2019 from 6:00-8:00pm at Christ Community Chapel. A letter from the Tree Commission will be drafted expressing their concerns with this project. Mr. Vaca explained how the installation of EMS lines affected the Geauga Lake area in the 1990's. Areas of great concern were the Station District, Paddock River Preserve, and the Aurora Audubon Sanctuary as well as the homes of Barrington.

✚ **Branches that extend into the Right of Way**

A conversation ensued about a homeowner who received a letter mandating that they remove the overhang branches of their trees from the right of way. Such letters sent by the city explain that dangerous branches in the right of way must be removed by the homeowner. If they are not removed in a timely manner, the city will have them removed and the property owner will be assessed for the cost.

✚ **Growth Award – hiking challenge**

It was suggested that the commission consider a hiking challenge of the city parks including the Moebius walk and the tree museum. A scavenger's hunt could be included to find certain trees within the city.

✚ **Christmas Tree Recycling**

It was suggested that the commission look into the details of a Christmas tree recycling program. It was believed that Stow and Solon offer such a program.

✚ **Moebius Nature Center Beaver**

There was a discussion about how the resident beaver took down the oak that was growing on the island. Mr. Swaney installed guards to protect the trees from the animal.

✚ **Dead Trees**

Dead trees were mentioned along State Route 43 backing up to Barrington Estates. These trees were determined to be on private property. There are also dead trees along State Route 82 heading toward Mantua that lean on cable tv lines. These too are located on private property and not under the city's jurisdiction unless they become a safety concern. Dr. Tomko made the argument that this is a habitat for woodpeckers and other wildlife.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Vaca moved to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. Ms. Entsminger seconded, and the motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Deborah Davis - Chairman

Marie Lawrie – Recording Secretary Pro-Tem