

Tree Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 10, 2017 at 4:30 PM
Ed Overland Room, City Hall, 381 E Main St, Stoughton

Members Present: Kevin Short, Dean Tangeman, Mike Point, Nicholas Yuknis and Sid Boersma

Absent & Excused: Robert Kardasz

Guest: Randy Malmquist, city resident

Staff: Director of Public Works Brett Hebert and Street Department Secretary Vickie Erdahl

Call to order: Meeting called to order @ 4:30 PM

1) Communications:

- Introductions and short welcome for new members. *Boersma* stated that the arborist position had been filled.

2) Forestry Reports: Jims Tree Service is around 70% completed with the ash tree/stump removals that were listed on the bid. The city is waiting for the new arborist to start to review trees in question and schedule and prioritize work on the urban forest. New member Mike Point stated that he is already involved with Aselsons through the work he does for the Senior Center and is willing to be a liaison.

Motion by Boersma to have Mike Point serve as the liaison to Aselsons for board supply and sales. Motion carried 4-0.

3) Review of Proposed Changes to Ord 10-2 (d) Terrace Trees: *Hebert* stated that the revised Ordinance was sent to the City Attorney and Planning Dept. and reviewed. This ordinance is intended to cover undeveloped areas as new developments are covered under Chapter 66. In the ordinance the wording in #5 was changed significantly and much easier to understand.

Costs involved will be posted to the website and also filled in on the permit when developer /homeowner is requesting the permit. Costs will be reviewed yearly by the Public Works Director and with the amount not written into the ordinance itself, it will not have to go through the attorney if increases are needed.

Motion by Boersma, seconded by Short to notify the Public Works Committee that the Tree Commission accepted the wording changes to Ord 10-2(d) Terrace Trees Motion carried 5-0.

4) Tree Commission Responsibilities: New members reviewed what the responsibilities were and the commission reviewed and made no changes to the document.

5) City Forester Position: *Hebert* informed the committee that John Kemppainen accepted the position as Urban Forester for the City of Stoughton. John will start on Tuesday, September 5, 2017. John has experience in writing contracts and will be setting up a program for scheduled tree trimming on a rotating basis for each year. A larger budget and staff increases have been requested in the budget for 2018.

6) Stoughton Municipal Zoning Ordinance: Appendix B: *Short* stated that there are trees on this list that need to be removed as they are considered an invasive species for Wisconsin and would also like the point system changed to bring in more diversity in the trees planted. *Short* would like to recommend to zoning that the planting system be based on shade produced.

In Davis, CA they have this type of a program and 15 years after construction the trees planted provided 50% shading. *Short* also stated that the City of Fitchburg is attempting to have this type of shade program. *Hebert* has a contact person in Fitchburg and will reach out to them for more information. The committee would like to place this item on September's agenda to discuss with the new forester for his input.

Committee members will mark on their lists the trees to be "removed" and which trees can remain for commercial development.

Boersma at this point stated that he would like to have Stoughton Utilities Director, Bob Kardasz, to discuss underground electric utilities. This item will be placed on September's agenda.

- 7) **Approval of minutes from July 13, 2017 Meeting:** Motion by *Boersma*, seconded by *Short* to approve the minutes. Carried 4-0.

- 8) **Review Homeowner request @ 1117 Park St to have a Black Walnut Tree @ 220 S Henry St Removed:** The Street Department was contacted by a homeowner at 1117 Park St (*Randy Malmquist*) regarding a black walnut tree @ 220 N Henry St. next to his property that is damaging his sidewalk, vehicle and making a mess on the street which the neighbors across the street don't appreciate either.

The tree was pruned in 2011 away from his property and is considered in good health, at that time there was only a ground inspection done and maybe an aerial inspection would reveal something different. If the tree was pruned more it would become very lopsided and that would not be good for the tree.

Tangeman stated that the wood of the tree is probably around \$250.00 if it were removed. He also stated that Black Walnuts are not terrace trees however they do increase the diversity in the city but should be planted in parks.

The committee would like the new foresters to review the situation before making a decision. Staff was requested to find out how many Black Walnut trees are in the city and where.

Motion by *Boersma*, seconded by *Short* to table to the September meeting.

- 9) **Budget Recommendations:** After a short discussion the committee wanted to advise the Mayor what they felt was needed in the budget for the necessary tree work to be completed.

Motion by *Short*, seconded by *Tangeman* to recommend to Mayor Olson to hire two full time arborists. Motion carried 5-0.

- 10) **Private Property Tree Planting:** *Hebert* stated that currently the Public Works Department has been planting replacement trees on private property. The tree cannot be planted more than ten feet behind the sidewalk. The homeowner has had a tree removed by the city in the terrace and there is an issue with replanting a tree in the terrace. *Hebert* received a request from an Alderperson to review this policy stating that the cities insurance carrier would probably have issues with going onto private property and also that the tax dollars are city funds and should not pay for anything that is placed on a private property. *Hebert* discussed the issue with the insurance company and they did **NOT** have a problem with the city practicing this procedure. When trees are planted on private property, the arborist had made contact and received approval from the homeowner. If a tree was declined, it was planted elsewhere in the city on terraces or in a park. In some cases, the trees were planted on private property under Ordinance 10-2(d) Terrace Trees were the homeowner or developer paid for the trees.

Hebert recommends developing a consent form for when a tree is planted on private property so that the homeowner understands that they are responsible and agrees to maintain the tree and holds the city "harmless". *Boersma* questioned if the Finance Dept. or the City Attorney needed to be involved in this decision. *Short* asked if the city had a grant program.

Placed on September's agenda.

- 11) Future Agenda Items:** Stoughton Municipal Zoning Ordinance, 1117 Park St – Removal of Walnut tree, Private Property Tree Planting and Stoughton Utilities (underground)

Motion by Yuknis, seconded by Point to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m. Respectfully submitted 8/15/17, Vickie Erdahl - Staff