

Urban Forest Commission

Meeting Minutes July 18, 2018

Attendance:

Commissioners: Christine Penney, Judy Gibbs, Brandon Van Tassel, Susan Stanich, Beth Kleinke

City Staff: Clark Christenson, City Forester; Diane Desotelle, City Provisional Natural Resources Coordinator; Erik Birkeland, Ex-Officio; City Councilor Em Westerlund (not present)

Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:01 pm.

Minute Approval:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the June 20th, 2018, Meeting. M/S/C.

Public Comment Period: Char Matheson spoke on her concern over the loss of old growth Cottonwood trees currently in Lincoln Park. It is her opinion that losing these trees could change the overall character of the park. Brandon Van Tassel agreed to follow up with Lisa Luokkola, Senior Project Coordinator, assigned to oversee the Lincoln Park revitalization plan.

Joe Herring introduced himself to the group and indicated he had driven up from Iowa to interview for the Forester position.

Forester's Report (Clark Christenson – City Forester)

- Park Maintenance City staff have completed plantings in the Lakeside neighborhood and have planted all but a handful of remaining trees along East 4th.
- The Emerald Ash Borer identified trees have all been replaced for the 2018 summer season. Maintenance crews have a few volunteer events planned this fall to replace an additional 30-50.
- Work continues on the development of City planting specifications. Clark would like to collect and compile any additional comments over the next two weeks. The objective here is to adopt a citywide specification that can go out with all projects. The main reference used was taken from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Their document discusses soil types, soil amounts, minimum boulevard size, and acceptable species based on size. Clark suspects St. Louis County will adopt very similar specification in the future.
- The City was approved to apply for grant funds that would assist with the development of a black ash study in Hartley Park as well as fund the development of a management plan and tree inventory.
- EAB injections on boulevard trees started on Central Avenue and will move East up to 21st Ave East. Clark explained to the group that the cost associated with each tree is related to its diameter. Trees that are over twelve inches require a microinjection of insecticide costing approximately \$75.00 each. Injections are expected to provide 2-3 years of protection. Two thirds of our identified affected trees are under twelve inches in diameter and are removed and replaced depending on the condition of the tree and site location.
- The iPads and new software came in two weeks ago. There is some follow-up work needed from the IT department for optional functionality of the ESRI system. Clark reported that he has dedicated approximately eight hours to tree inventory work.

Old Business:**UFC Transformation Sub-committee update (Erik Birkeland – Property & Facilities Manager)**

An internal meeting was held to discuss the potential approach to convert the Urban Forest Commission into the Duluth Natural Resources Commission. Jim Filby Williams will attend and present to the commission on August 15th to discuss the process, timeline, and next steps. Erik shared the City's vision that this commission would have a broadened scope to add value to plant resources, water resources, invasive species, public lands, urban forests, wildlife, and the Duluth Natural Area Program (DNAP) among other areas.

A few concerns were brought up including the number of members, increased technical expertise, and focus on publically owned resources. Eric encouraged the members to bring up their questions and concerns next month when Jim could address them.

New Business:**Hartley Nomination to the Duluth Natural Areas Program (Diane Desotelle – Provisional Natural Resources Coordinator)**

The City in partnership with Hartley Nature Center is currently in the process of nominating approximately 620 acres of Hartley Park as a Duluth Natural Area. These lands include one of the largest northern hardwood forests and wet meadows in the City. The park also has a long history of education and recreational activity related to the enjoyment, preservation and restoration of the natural environment.

Diane informed the group that if nominated successfully the City has one year to get a management plan in place. She also shared with the commission the new DNAP logo. For more information on the DNAP program please see: <http://www.duluthmn.gov/media/543837/hartley-dnap-fact-sheet.pdf>

**Planning Commission Update – Judy Gibbs**

Judy reported that variance request on Minimum Lot Frontage Requirement in a Rural Residential 1 (RR-1) District at 10013 West Skyline Parkway by Edward and Candace Barbo was denied by the Planning Commission on July 10th. She also let the group know that she was contacted for a statement by the lawyer involved in the variance request.

Adjournment:

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00, m/s/c.