

# MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of January 19, 2023

Held remotely via Zoom

**Decision/Consensus/Assignment items are set out in bold.**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED TO REVIEW THESE MINUTES CAREFULLY FOR ASSIGNMENT AND ACTION ITEMS PERTAINING TO THEM**

The meeting of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission (MTAC) of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) convened at 5:30 p.m. on January 19, 2022, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Peter MacDonagh (U of M liaison), Chris Linde (District 1), Giuseppe Marrari (District 2), Carol Sersland (Districts 3 and 5), Barb Schlaefer (At-Large), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Linea Palmisano (City Council, Ward 13), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner District 1).

Not in attendance: Steve Collin (Public Works), Mary Bolla (Districts 4 and 6).

Guests in attendance: Tim Keane, Philip Potyondy (MPRB Sustainable Forestry Coordinator), Danielle Schumerth (MPRB Forestry Outreach Coordinator), Michaela Neu (Green Minneapolis).

## CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order. **The MTAC meeting minutes for December 15, 2022, were approved as delivered.**

## INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions of existing and then incoming MTAC members were completed.

## MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Sievert reports that bids from the nurseries for buying 2023 trees are due to the Forestry Department on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Because the purchase of trees this year involves American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds, the bid process is taking longer than in previous years because of the extra requirements. There are 9,700 trees for 2023. It is interesting to note the contrast between previous plantings in which the trees were replacing ash trees. This year they have removed about 5,000 trees so there would be an increase of about 4,000 trees in the city. This is a big addition!

Tree inspectors are encouraged to keep an accurate inventory of the vacant locations where trees could be planted. Tree inspectors and the title of arborist are becoming interchangeable. They are equipped with iPads containing the software "TreeKeeper", which is used to track data for assigning tree removals, etc.

Currently the Department is pruning trees. The number of tree removals is down as the Department is not removing as many ashes or elms. There are approximately 1,000 boulevard ash trees being treated. If they cease receiving injections that result in EAB, these trees would be removed.

A new challenge for the Department is the expiration of the 2022 lease agreement for the wood processing site near the North side office. The renewal process involves extending the zoning permit for wood processing at the site (wood processing is required to be done indoors). Because of the

isolated nature of the location – with no nearby neighbors – there is less chance of disturbing households.

Next subject is the \$19,000 received from the sale of carbon credits. Ms. Neu verified that Green Minneapolis' (GM) first MPRB project netted \$19,000 with 700 carbon credits<sup>1</sup> sold of the approximately 4,800 that are for sale. GM is in discussions with other buyers to sell the remaining 4,000 carbon credits. **This sale will, hopefully, be completed and the proceeds be transferred to the MPRB in the coming months.**

Follow up to the EAB Question and Answer Sheet ("Private Tree Condemnation and Removal Q &A) from last month's meeting: <sup>2</sup>.

The Department is working to make this information more easily found on the website.

[https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/PrivateTreeRemoval\\_QA.pdf](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/PrivateTreeRemoval_QA.pdf)

In the process of 2023 MTAC appointments there was a 'snafu' – with a previous commissioner not being reappointed.

Sievert and Craig Pinkalla (Tree Preservation Coordinator) will be meeting with their Planning Department 'Counterparts'. Cliff Swenson and Adam Arvidson. The meeting topic will address protocols and procedures for tree impact assessment. Craig has been developing a tree prioritization or rating system which can be used during the park planning process.

Arbor Day update: Friday April 28<sup>th</sup> at Windom Park (Lowry Avenue NE and Johnson Street NE). The Department is planting around 200 trees. The neighborhood association is offering a lot of support. **Let Schumerth know if you want to be on the planning committee.**

Sievert described how each MPLS department has to develop a Racial Equity Action Plan goal. The goal for the Forestry Department is establish a procedure that is used during park improvement projects that promotes tree preservation and provides public transparency regarding the impact to existing trees.

Sievert reported that the proposed trees lost on the Hennepin Avenue rebuild will be significantly less than originally thought thanks to Craig Pinkalla working with City Public Works. It would be beneficial to extend an invitation to Mr. Pinkalla to describe what happened during the planning process with the feedback he offered and subsequent negotiations.

**Schlaefer requested materials with which to get oriented about the MTAC and to study about the Commission's activities.**

**The 2022 Annual Report will be placed on the Department's website.**

#### **MTAC BUSINESS Co-Chair MacDonagh**

For discussion: Change the By-Laws from five to seven members to represent each Park Board District. There would be one MTAC member for each district and an at-large for a total of seven citizen members in place of the current five members.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carbon credit value: approximately \$27 per credit. Remaining: 4000 at \$27 = \$108,000

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EAB-Treatment-Guide-2021.pdf>

**Willeke moves that the proposed By-Laws be amended to require a Commissioner be appointed for each Park District. The proposed By-Laws will be presented to the MPRB for approval. Giuseppe seconded. Discussion. Accepted.**

**MacDonagh would like to have a co-chair. Is anyone interested? This topic will be added to the February meeting agenda.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

Update from Green Minneapolis (GM) – 4800 carbon credit offsets have been certified for sale. GM is in contact with other “local entities” to continue selling the remaining credits. GM is in the process of applying for the next project with MPRB and the first project with Hennepin County.

GM is positioning the group to be a “resource for all of the upcoming urban tree funding opportunities and engage our stakeholders in applying for funding” and connecting the private sector and public sector. They know there is corporate interest in not only purchasing carbon offsets but supporting our “urban forest fund”. GM continues to solicit funds for urban tree planting and maintenance, and hope to fund their tree partners directly.

Willeke emphasized the need for Hennepin County to focus on planting trees in urban street corridors as opposed to rural settings. Ms. Neu noted this request.

Nicholson reported on a recent press release from the state regarding \$1.5 million in funding for the ‘urban forest’. There are additional DNR grants focused outside the metro area.

A question was raised about the Arbor Day trees to be planted in Windom Park. Are these connected to the funds raised by Green Minneapolis? Sievert’s response is that the Arbor Day trees would relate to future fund credits (because the credits are for certification after the trees are planted).

The first round of credits was purchased by Winslow Capital which bought the offset credits to have a local impact. Winslow Capital has been purchasing carbon offsets outside of Minnesota and even outside the U.S. because they had not found a local opportunity.

Have there been questions about where these carbon offset trees are planted directed to GM as there have been to the Forestry Department? Which Potyondy provided maps with locations to the inquiry. GM responded that since tree locations are not the property of GM, they directed the inquiry to the Forestry Department.

Is there a tree inventory map on-line? There never has been. Though there were park maps with tree locations many years ago.

Motion to adjourn.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Commission’s Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary