

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION
Meeting of June 16, 2022
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 June 16, 2022, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Peggy Booth, Co-Chair Peter MacDonagh (U of M), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Carol Sersland, Tim Keane, Giuseppe Marrari, Susan Olmsted, Don Willeke (Mayor’s Representative), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director)

Not in attendance: Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative), Steve Collin (Public Works), MPRB Commissioner Steffanie Musich (District 5)

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy (MPRB Sustainable Forestry Coordinator).

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair Booth called the meeting to order. Introductions by Board members as well as guests were made. **The MTAC meeting minutes for May 19, 2022, were approved.**

MPRB FORESTRY UPDATE

Forestry Director Sievert started his update with a summary of the carbon credits presentation to the Administration and Finance Committee of the MPRB at their meeting on the previous evening. Green Minneapolis has gathered data from 2019 through 2021 for 23,000 trees that can be used for the ‘sale’ process. (Chair Booth sent a PDF of the Green Minneapolis PowerPoint presentation on June 16th for review.)

Two separate agreements were sent out of the Subcommittee to the full Park Board— a commitment for over 25 years including an agreement that MPRB will maintain and replace trees, but is not responsible for catastrophic losses (e.g. tornado). Currently Green Minneapolis (GM) has 5,000 credits available to sell, with GM having a corporation to buy these at \$35/credit (\$175,000). Sievert explained that following 25 years the total money received by the Park Board based on selling these carbon credits, sums which would not be a total replacement for planting trees, but a supplement for what the Forestry Department does anyway could reach \$1 million.

Update regarding the Forestry Outreach Coordinator (FOC) – they are down to the final 5 candidates. Civil service interviewers consisted of an MPRB park supervisor, Potyondy, and Booth. Booth related that all 5 FOC final candidates are outstanding.

Arborist hiring are nearly complete. 39 of 41 are hired.

9,200+ trees planted – wrap up in June – with watering increasing in the evening to keep up with the expected hot temperatures and dry conditions. Seasonal employees could be used for watering but are short-staffed overall this summer.

Painter Park (33rd and Lyndale Av) is undergoing improvements – with 7 trees transplanted within the park (done with a rented tree spade).

Seward neighborhood update: have been meeting with neighbors and Xcel. July 12th will be the Seward neighborhood tree-walk-through.

Tree climbing date at Whittier School for 4th and 5th graders will be June 21st.

ARPA funding totaling \$1M was approved for 2023 & 2024 MPRB tree planting. The locations for planting are in the two Green Zones: north and south (McKinley and Ventura Village).

Activities that were posted in the Park Board newsletter: Storm clean up on May 11th and fruit tree planting at Martin Luther King Park (Nicollet and 41st St) (approximately 18 trees).

The Department is brainstorming on the 2023 Arbor Day location.

Booth mentioned the topic of ‘tree equity’ that came up at the MPRB committee meeting. The MTAC should be prepared to address. This could be included in the Annual Report. Also, Commissioner Menz mentioned using volunteers to plant trees – impractical – how to explain to the new Commissioners?

VOLUNTEERS PLANT FRUIT TREES

Volunteers from the Kingfield Neighborhood Association helped plant 18 new fruit trees at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The neighborhood has committed to watering the trees throughout the summer. Last fall they learned the basics of fruit tree pruning from the University of Minnesota and arborists from the Forestry Department. There are now a total of 36 fruit trees on the north side of the park building. If all goes well, volunteers should be able to do some picking this year.

Below: Arborist **Frank Jakowich** (in vest) helps volunteers plant fruit trees. Below bottom: Crewleader **Shaun Brust** explains proper planting depth to volunteers.



MTAC 2022 ANNUAL REPORT PREPARATIONS

On June 6th co-chairs Booth and MacDonagh sent the MTAC a draft of their recommendations for the Annual Report. The three general topics are

- a) to protect trees,
- b) to assure long term tree care, and
- c) to increase tree canopy on private property.

Keane asked if there has ever been discussion of a tree preservation ordinance for the City especially as it relates to legacy trees and/or stands of trees. Booth replied that an ordinance proposal was in the recommendations to the City Council in 2020 and they were working with Council staff. Subsequently, COVID arrived, then various issues following George Floyd’s murder, loss of several supportive council members during the election (including loss of MTAC rep from the council Robin Garwood, Ward 2 assistant), so discussion on a tree ordinance was not pursued.

MTAC 2022 Annual Report could be presented to MPRB either August 17th or September 21st Booth suggested that the Report get to the Superintendent well before the MPRB’s budget is compiled, therefore the August data is preferred.

Nicholson has presented a 'tree ordinance' review to the MTAC. An ordinance would be the City's responsibility rather than the Park Board and would address trees on private property.

Booth mentioned that the City has a 'site plan' ordinance with one or two family dwellings exempted and therefore we may not be needing an entirely new ordinance, but amendments could be made to existing ordinances. This is an approach that we could use further information about. She added the recent announcement of the District Court putting a hold on the 2040 plan. (Keane represents the Audubon Society Board that brought the suit against the City).

Why is there an MTAC? MTAC was established approximately 20 years ago prompted by the City developing a Tree Policy. Booth asked the members if we want to specifically include a goal to develop a tree protection ordinance. Olmsted asked about what data we may have that indicates an ordinance is necessary and what the ordinance would target. Nicholson mentioned, e.g. the conflicts between affordable housing and tree protection.

What are we trying to protect? What are our priorities? Suggestion for focus of this ordinance could start with a focus on trees and species, e.g. 'not allowed to cut down an oak tree without a permit'.

Are we in agreement that the MTAC focus on MPRB construction and private properties for this year's Report, and only include a tree ordinance as one means towards addressing trees on private property? Consensus was yes.

MacDonagh added to the discussion that the process for park planning, when it involves trees, is broken and the process needs to be fixed –something needs to be put in place to make sure Minneapolis is not losing trees.

Booth asked for volunteers to assist her and MacDonagh on refining the Report recommendations: Keane volunteered.

What other key topics do we want to present to the Board with the many new commissioners? Ideas brought up include:

- a) How many trees have been "lost" on private property?
- b) Explain how tree equity fits into the canopy equation (priority to underserved neighborhoods)
- c) Watering and climate change and it's a life-long process
- d) \$10,000,000 is the Forestry budget – 1/5 of the Park Board's budget
- e) Prioritizing areas of need – and the costs of tree maintenance (of keeping a single tree alive)

'Bring back' historical slides, for the actual presentation, about the benefits trees provide as an educational update to the new commissioners.

MTAC FIELD TRIP

Ideas? MacDonagh mentioned favorite sites that we haven't been to. Or another example would be the U of M campus. We'll schedule the trip for the September or October meeting.

REVISION TO MPRB COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS PROTOCOL

Booth brought up that on June 15th MPRB had a presentation about proposed revisions to their Community Engagement policies which includes a provision that standing advisory committees (e.g. MTACO) have bylaws approved by the MPRB Board of Commissioners. The MPRB Board is expected to act on the new policies and procedures in mid-July. At a minimum, the proposed languages says that by laws shall discuss a) election of officers, b) agenda setting, c) conflict resolution, d) member dismissal, e) meeting rules, and f) required training.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.
Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary