

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION
Meeting of July 21, 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 July 21, 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), Tim Keane, Susan Olmsted, Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Steve Collin (Public Works), MPRB Commissioner Steffanie Musich (District 5).

Not in attendance: Carol Sersland, Giuseppe Marrari, Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative),

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

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair Booth called the meeting to order. **The MTAC meeting minutes for June 16, 2022, were approved.**

MTAC 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Per Sievert July 30th email: The Annual Report presentation to the MPRB has been rescheduled from August 17th to September 7th. The Commission discussed draft2 of Annual Report emailed by Booth on July 14th.

Report Topic A: Trees Matter

1. The greater the canopy the greater the benefits
2. Tree canopy increases our health and well-being
3. Youth benefit from trees – e.g. pathways to employment

Report Topic B: We've Achieved a Lot

1. Ash canopy tree replacement plan is completed – increased tree diversity and tree equity
2. [Following discussion this was changed from hiring Forestry Outreach Coordinator to accomplishments by Forest Preservation Coordinator – see below]
3. Outside funding secured – federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds over the next 2 years for tree planting: \$500k / year¹

Discussion: Public ash trees that were a danger have been removed, private property trees remain. Does a metric for public vs private tree canopy percentage exist? There is not a percentage breakdown at this time. The Department is working on analyzing this metric (e.g.

¹ In 2021, Green Minneapolis submitted a funding request to the City of Minneapolis Sustainability Office on behalf of the MPRB, and in May 2022 the City directed \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to increase tree planting by the MPRB. These funds prioritize adding trees in the city's major heat islands: its [North and South Green Zones](#) and downtown; as well as adding to the tree canopy across environmentally disadvantaged parts of the city.

canopy above public space vs private space) (about 200K total ash trees as of 2004 of which 40K were on public which leaves 160K on private).

Forestry Preservation Coordinator, Craig Pinkala, and the Public Works Department has developed into an ideal situation in which Public Works call him for consultation. Street construction has been adding trees where there weren't trees (e.g. 500 trees added where there were not trees previously). The term is "afforestation" = establishing a forest where there was not one before.

Work on securing funding through the carbon offset program and other sources for tree planting and maintenance is ongoing. Musich tried soliciting funds from corporations, but got no takers/

Report Topic C: Recommendations

1. Protect trees in parks
 - a. increased priority of retaining existing trees and all MPRB construction projects
 - b. direct staff to implement procedures to ensure tree protection is prioritized and
 - c. conduct a tree impact analysis on every proposed construction project (use standard professional criteria. i.e. CTLA (certified tree and landscape appraisal) wording that Craig suggests
2. Provide necessary tree care
 - a. continue to increase the watering of young trees
 - b. assure that young trees have timely structural pruning emphasize the activity most cost effective
 - c. expand the citizen pruner program and youth engagement in tree care
3. increase tree canopy on private property
 - a. target tree planting and care systems to achieve tree equity
 - b. incentivize tree planting and care on rental property and non-residential property
 - c. develop a tree protection ordinance and/or use city site plan review authority to increase tree canopy through tree protection planning and care.....and reduce canopy loss

Discussion: Regarding protecting trees in parks discussion ensued about planting locations when a recreation facility may be enlarged in the future. It was suggested that a scope of work be added into the RFP language and the contract of work which includes preservation of existing tree canopy and coordination with the Forestry Department. The planners would provide the number of trees that would be removed because of a planned project and the plan could then be reviewed and alternatives discussed.

Is there a way to get replacement trees to the landowners once their tree has been condemned? Especially public housing sites. For future meeting, MTAC should request a speaker to address why there are so few plantings around the public housing.

Also: think about where trees have been condemned and have a program where landowners can request a tree for replacement – incentive program.

Keane motion to recommend the points as edited for the Annual Report. Collin seconded. Passed.

Booth requested any photos that we may have pertaining to urban forestry.

MPRB FORESTRY UPDATE

On July 20th the MPRB voted to approve two resolutions that are agreements to collaborate with Green Minneapolis on a pilot Urban Tree Carbon Offset Program. The first of its kind in Minnesota, the program is designed to sell carbon credits certified by City Forest Credits for trees that are added to the urban tree canopy in Minneapolis. The aim of the pilot Urban Tree Carbon Offset Program is to establish a new funding source so that MPRB can expand the tree canopy, not just replace individual trees² They have at least one buyer who's interested in participating (i.e. purchasing).

Five finalist candidates were interviewed for the Forestry Outreach Coordinator. References are being checked at this time. The FOC should be announced by MTAC's next meeting.

Extra tree watering (in addition to that done during normal business hours) is continuing on a voluntary basis with staff receiving overtime pay for this duty. To date staff have made 32,000 waterings to new trees with bags. Downtown and North Loop are assigned a private contractor (1800 waterings). Primarily watering this year's trees – but crews add the other trees in proximity if they are looking like they need water. Sievert emailed a tree watering 'primer' video to the Commission on June 20th.

Seward Neighborhood Tree Walk was held and successful getting neighbors out. So successful that they will be doing another. Musich proposed that additional tours be conducted. MacDonagh suggested MTAC reps participate in such tours in each of their districts.

MTAC web page with past agendas and minutes is available for review. Links to our meetings can be sent to the public. Sievert has not received feedback about the web page items. Annual Reports need to be added. <https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park-care-improvements/trees/minneapolis-tree-advisory-commisison/>

The Whittier School climbing event for youth was held, and it was so successful that another will be held on August 4th.

The department continues to discuss where Arbor Day will be held in 2023. Discussion about where it has been held and what year. (2022: North loop, 2021: cancelled. 2020: cancelled. 2019: Wirth)

Status of ash removals? Mary Majors has been working with the contractors assigned to the work. Four contractors assigned to stump removals. Fewer elms being found with Dutch elm disease, a few hundred annually. Nicholson and others noted that Lyndale and 66th in Richfield is an EAB death zone.

MTAC FIELD TRIP

Ideas for the annual MTAC field trip were brainstormed: "Home Ward" tours. Storm water and trees working together. Areas affected by the tornadoes with public housing and the trees did not get

² July 22, 2022 email from the MPRB.

Additionally: This initial pilot project is envisioned as the first of many annual tree-planting carbon credit projects with the MPRB, with proceeds from the sales of carbon credits from prior projects supplementing the MPRB's tree planting budget in future years. The MPRB incurs no additional costs for its role in the program; its only obligation is to plant and care for the trees included in these projects for 25 years – work that is already performed by its forestry department.

replaced. Mention was made of recent past trips to the neighborhoods affected by the North Side tornado, to the MPRB wood processing and tree staging sites. A spring option would be an alternative to the fall trip and review the incoming tree staging area under the Washington Avenue Bridge.

NEW BUSINESS

MPRB Emma Pachuta was unable to attend this meeting, yet she invites MTAC to comment on the draft Cedar-Isles Master Plan plan – **MacDonagh will send the link to the planning website** for the park plan and we can make comments. (See July 23rd email with links.)

Booth reminded the group that no City Council representative has been appointed to MTAC since the last election. It doesn't have to be an elected official but someone to represent them. What Council committee will we present to? Who to contact to schedule a presentation? Perhaps Lisa Goodman, and **Willeke will contact her.**

ADJOURNMENT

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