

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of February 16, 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), Mary Bolla (Districts 4 and 6), Barb Schlaefer (At-Large), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Linea Palmisano (City Council, Ward 13), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Steve Collin (Public Works).

Not in attendance: Danielle Schumerth (MPRB Forestry Outreach Coordinator), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner District 1), Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative).

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

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order. **The MTAC meeting minutes for January 19, 2023, were approved as delivered.**

MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

NOTE to MTAC members: use the same ZOOM link to access every meeting. MacDonagh will add the ZOOM link to the agenda.

By Laws

The Tree Commission By-Laws were updated at the December meeting, additional edits which added two more positions to the MTAC by creating a representative for each Park District. Currently Districts 3 and 5 share one position, and Districts 4 and 6 share one position. The next step is for the Park Board to approve the By-Laws which are planned to be presented to them at the March 1st or 15th meeting. The next step, if the Board approves the By-Laws, is to appoint citizens to the District with no representative¹. For example, Commissioner Sersland would now represent District 5, and a citizen from District 3 would be appointed. Reviewing who had applied previously applied could be used. (Update: The By-Laws will be presented at the March 15th meeting.

There will then be two positions for Sievert to select: the tree care professional and the business developer.

MTAC portion of the MPRB website

A roster of the current membership has been added to the website². As are agendas and meeting minutes.

¹ https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020_commissioner_districts_all-add.pdf

² <https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MTAC-Roster-Feb.2023-website.pdf>

Park Board Commissioner Officers for 2023

Meg Forney will continue as the Chair. Alicia Smith is the Vice Chair.

Wood processing facility

All pruning debris and removed trees are taken to the Northside Service Center near the Camden Bridge where the wood is processed into wood chips. The site has a lease agreement with a company that paid the park Board a monthly fee. This company would process the wood into wood chips which they would then sell for biofuel. The lease agreement expired at the end of 2022. Now a new method for processing wood is being explored. Ten years ago, the process for wood disposal changed from chipping on-site in the street to hauling logs to a site where they are recycled. The previous method caused many injuries. The Department may use the existing site, but because of no market (or low prices) for biofuel, the Department may have to pay a company to come in and grind all the wood when it reaches a certain amount, and then take it away. The most likely place for the wood chips is St. Paul's District Energy (<https://www.districtenergy.com/services/how-it-works/biomass/>).

Sersland asked about the source of the wood chip piles at Lake Nokomis. Sievert described the three piles of wood chips throughout Minneapolis: Nokomis, Armitage Park, and Marshall Terrace neighborhood. These are all from private companies. At one point the Park Board had 13 neighborhood wood chip sites. As the Department prepares for spring planting, they take chips from the piles to the new tree distribution site (at Bohemian Flats on the Mississippi River) to mulch the newly arrived trees – before the trees go out for planting.

Sievert explained that larger trees may go to Wood from the Hood³. The 'removal' tree is put into the 'Tree Keeper' software system and the company can go out and look at it to determine if it fits their needs. A blue dot indicates that they will use it. The firm sends the purchase price to the Department. This was indicated to be a possible field trip.

Arbor Day 2023, Friday April 28th, Windom Park

Danielle Schumerth, Forestry Outreach Coordinator, has been working on the planning efforts for Arbor Day. A meeting with the volunteer planning committee on March 9th.

Potyondy provided a short report on the progress of the planning efforts. The neighborhood is very excited about the 'party' and are very involved and have added activities.

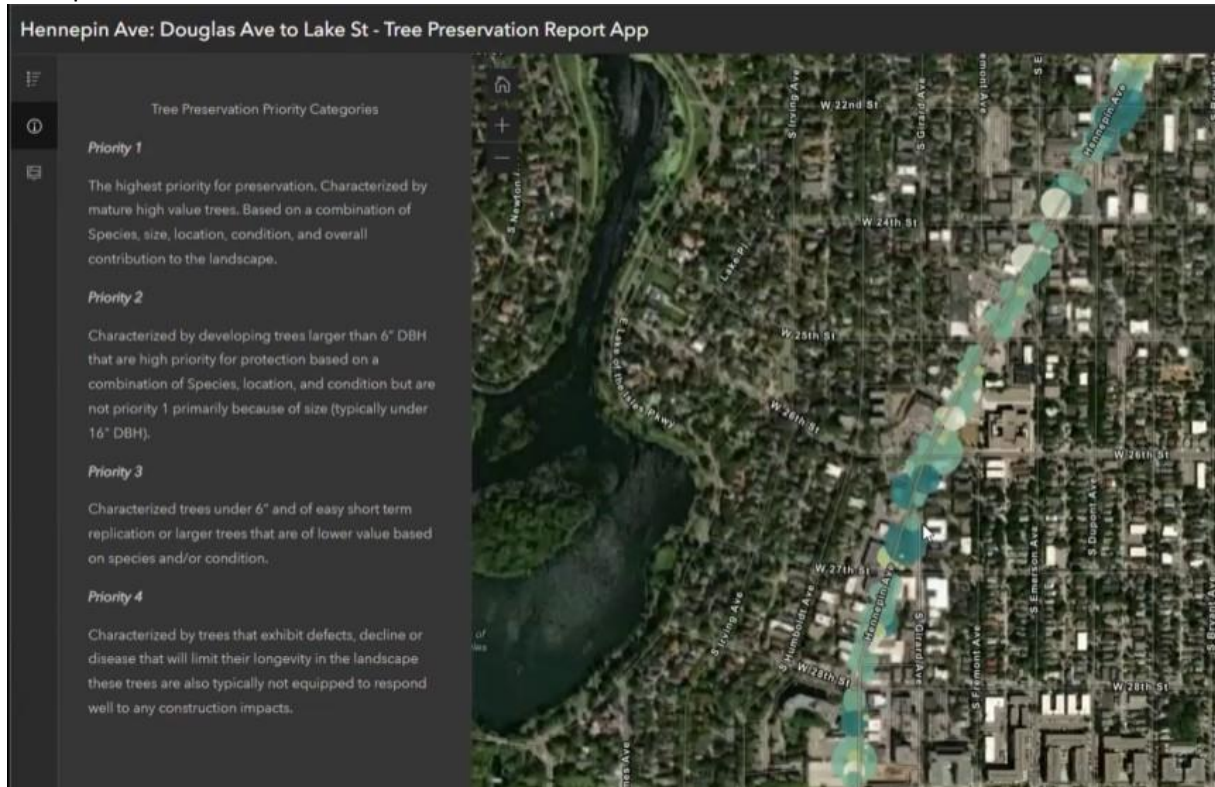
Update: MPRB Forestry Tree Removal Protocol for MPRB Planning.

Sievert and Craig Pinkalla (Forestry Preservation) met with the Planning directors, Adam Arvidson and Cliff Swenson. They have implemented a Prioritization process on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 being the best) which is applied at the initial park plan. Based on the criteria developed to rate a tree, the tree is assigned a value.

Pinkalla is working with park planners on Bottineau and Clinton Field. So that planners know that they could do all they can to save a Priority 1 tree. Tree inspectors can add to the process by verifying the tree condition priority rating. This process can be incorporated in the Department's racial equity plan also.

³ <https://woodfromthehood.com/>

Example:



A comment encouraged Sievert and Pinkalla to present this process to the Park Board so they know it's available and implemented. The documentation on the park planning website eventually would contain maps and documentation of the tree priorities.

Could larger trees at a priority 1 be moved with a tree spade? The department has access to rent a tree spade. This type of transplantation could happen. The Park Board doesn't have a tree spade because they are expensive, and the rented spades come with an operator – and the Department doesn't use it often enough.

Additional question about the soil component of the new plantings, to assure that the contractors are using the proper soil. Collin mentioned that Public Works has a standard or protocol that is specified for planting to assure that the newly planted tree survives.

Update: MPRB 2023 New Tree Distribution Site. Timeline & Location

9600 new trees arrive in late March and will be stored at the parkway site under the Washington Avenue Bridge.

Schlaefler asked, What are the tree varieties? Sievert will send the list.

MTAC members are encouraged to visit the tree site under the Washington Avenue bridge along the Mississippi River in mid-April to see the action. Planting is generally completed by early June. This was indicated to be a possible field trip.

OUTREACH

Tree climbing with Whittier School students in April. This summer the Teen Teamworks crew will be working and mulching in parks and observe tree removal and urban tree care in general.

Orientation for the new MTAC members will be scheduled.

MTAC BUSINESS

Co-Chair MacDonagh

Willeke suggested that we discuss the planting of native species and why or why not this should be implemented. Post this on the Park Board website.

Introduction of Barb Schlaefer (at-large) who lives in District 6. Mary Bolla represents Park Districts 4 and 6.

MacDonagh asked for a volunteer for the Co-Chair position. Responsibilities for this position were discussed.

Previously the MTAC discussed having a meeting with the Park Board Chair. This was put on hold while the park planning and tree impact discussion was ongoing. Now that the prioritization has been put in place this may not be necessary.

Follow up from last fall regarding the EAB condemnations. Sievert reported that there are agencies investigating the possibility of creating funding sources for hardship cases for tree removal. The Hennepin County Forester has asked about how the County might help. A listening and informational session is being held at the Cub grocery store on Broadway Avenue on March 8 and 11. A question was asked about other cities which have infested ash trees and their management. Their reason for not removing has been lack of funding.

Sievert summarized the available payment plan for hardship cases.

Linde reminded us that many of the hardships are occurring on the north side of the City and are happening to older homeowners and the BIPOC community. The bill can run up to \$10-15K with multiple ash on a property. Could the MTAC lend its support to bills of this sort in the legislature?

Michaela Neu reported that Green Minneapolis has been active in contacting the legislature and working towards accessing funds to utilize the funds to subsidize homeowners.

Willeke reported that the MTAC has advocated to the MPRB that they do something about this issue. He also noted the City has subsidized private trees for availability.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary