

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of May 18, 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 May 18, 2023, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Peter MacDonagh (U of M liaison), Chris Linde (District 1), Co-Chair Giuseppe Marrari (District 2), John Kruse (District 3), Tim Keane (District 4), Barb Schlaefer (District 6), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Linea Palmisano (City Council, Ward 13), Curt Hartog (Executive Director for MPS Facilities, School Board Representative).

Not in attendance: Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner District 1), Carol Sersland (District 5)(traveling in Norway on a study fellowship) (and, at this moment listening to the helicopter that is transporting timber from the mountainside to the valley floor), Steve Collin (Public Works), Mary Bolla (At-Large), Sydney Schaaf (City Trees Program Coordinator)

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

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order. **The MTAC meeting minutes for March 16, 2023, were approved as delivered.**

INTRODUCTIONS

MacDonagh noted that there are two additional commission members which means that all individual Park Districts now have a representative.

Introductions were made because there are many new members.

Introductions of existing MTAC members who have been on the Commission since 2022 were completed.

Peter MacDonagh – University of Minnesota Liaison has been a member of the MTAC since 2013,

goals: diversity of trees planted is happening,

Don Willeke – since 1974, member since 2004

Giuseppe Marrari – (District 2) representing the interests of the north side communities.

John Kruse (District 3) – active in the neighborhood, and new member of the MTAC

Steve Nicholson – Private consultant

Curt Hartog – Engineer and Executive Director for Facilities with the Minneapolis Public Schools

Barb Schlaefer – (District 6) focusing on tree equity, and the communications between all divisions of the Park Board, learn more about tree species and whether we should be planting more native tree species.

Chris Linde - District 1, east of the river) Worked on an EAB treatment plan in St. Anthony neighborhood resulting in about 115 trees surviving, was on the Bicycle Advisory Committee for 8 years,

Tim Keane – (District 4) – glad to be joining the MTAC again.

Philip Potyondy – sitting in for Ralph Sievert today, otherwise known for urban forestry analytics and public outreach.

MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

MTAC's April meeting was a field trip to visit the Department's temporary tree distribution site at the Bohemian Flats. Craig Pinkalla (Forestry Preservation Coordinator) guided MTAC members through the trees at the site and planting activities.

A review of the visit included: praising the level of diversity of tree species (127 species), impressed by the variety and quality of trees, and the fact that white oaks are being planted – which is an important component of the overall planting effort.

Polyandry discussed the current protocol for Park Board planning efforts and Pinkalla's process of ranking trees that are on the site of the proposed park development. (The MTAC had a discussion about this process at the February 2023 meeting.) In addition to ranking the trees based on age, condition, and location they are considering a dollar value for the existing trees. The process has been well received by the Planners.

Tree nursery – so far (at the time of this meeting) 9,000 trees planted, and the plan is to wrap up the planting before Memorial Day. Additional seasonal staff is being brought on to assist.

Tree planting budget for 2024: 2022 was the last use of the tree levy, but this year (and next) there is \$1 million of ARPA funds. Half of this is applied this year and half will be applied next year and this is half of the planting budget. Next year the Department is planting trees at a 2 to 1 replacement rate.

Arbor Day – there were more than 1,000 attendees on a drizzly afternoon. Many trees were planted and Peggy Booth was honored for her service on the MTAC for nearly 20 years.

Outreach by the Department – Pillsbury Community School was out planting trees prior to the Arbor Day festivities and students have also been shown tree climbing as a way of interesting them in arboriculture.

Tree distribution to citizens who requested a tree is scheduled for the coming weekend (May 20).

Orientation for new MTAC members is being prepared and scheduled soon.

The Department is applying for Inflation Reduction Act funding for tree planting and stump removal for 2024.

MTAC BUSINESS

Co-Chair MacDonagh

Keane reported on a clear cut tree removal by the University of Minnesota at the corner of 29th Street and Como Avenue. MacDonagh will check on this and report back to the Commission.

Status of soils is that they are very dry and watering will continue to be a priority.

Kruse brought up the issue of private tree removal and those property owners who are lacking the means to pay for the unexpected bill. Is this still a relevant issue?

Schaaf will address this with the Commission at a future meeting.

Palmisano reported that the Council continues to work on a way forward to provide help for those property owners who need assistance. She noted that there are two different processes if the Park Board condemns a tree versus if a city department condemns a tree. The Council and staff is working on this too.

Another of the challenges in addressing tree condemnation on private property is getting the information out to homeowners and neighborhood associations. Potyondy attended a series of meetings held on the north side of Minneapolis to answer questions. The Park Board hosted four meetings. The Harrison neighborhood is sending letters to state legislators with the goal of raising awareness and acquiring funding.

Motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:35 p.m.
Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary