

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of July 20, 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 July 20, 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), Mary Bolla (District 4), Carol Sersland (District 5), Barb Schlaefer (District 6), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Linea Palmisano (City Council, Ward 13), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Steve Collin (Public Works), Curt Hartog (School Board Representative).

Not in attendance: Tim Keane (At-Large), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Sydney Schaaf (City Trees Program Manager), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner, District 1).

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy (MPRB Sustainable Forestry Coordinator), Danielle Schumert (Forestry Outreach Coordinator).

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order. **The MTAC meeting minutes for June 15, 2023, were not available and will be approved at the August meeting.**

MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Director Sievert started off with administrative topics.

The Department is completing typical tree work: pruning and watering. The Department has extended watering for overtime volunteers. There continues to be elm removal, limited ash removal. Stump removal is getting underway after contract preparation issues have been resolved.

Schlaefer had a question regarding the estimated number of trees lost due to dry summer conditions per the TreeKeeper software. Sievert replied that there is a Tree Survival Study conducted at the end of the season which has indicated that 90% of new trees survive – with the dead ones getting replaced. Watering is dependent on heavy truck drivers with a CDL (license) being available to run the large trucks. An estimate of 30,000 trees have been watered.

New Member Orientation

Sievert shared the screen from Department Headquarters.

For the full orientation presentation see the recorded video starting at 36:00 minutes and ending at approximately 1 hour:30 minutes.

On Monday July 31, 2023 Sievert emailed a link for the July MTAC meeting during which he presented a Member Orientation regarding the Forestry Department activities and responsibilities.

You can copy the recording information below

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/RUUPvwhyKPCtQor7odaN01tmPx9oL6YMW2BoBeG5MhL8iq6A71PV2gAb_Cpi90Di.0oT4IOSBaGPLoOvB

Passcode: +?D#d3=*

A question was posed about the carbon offset program and its financial revenue and/or costs. An explanation was provided. The Secretary is adding to the explanation with past meeting minutes which provide a larger context to Commission members who have recently joined the MTAC.

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2023 MEETING MINUTES:

*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 credits¹ 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.***

FROM THE JANUARY 2023 MEETING MINUTES:

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.

FROM THE JULY 2022 MEETING MINUTES

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).

Willeke shared history about the creation of the Tree Advisory Commission in 1974 and its subsequent role as a citizen advisory commission and its role in investing in the “green” infrastructure of the City.

Kruse mentioned that there are citizens in his district who have opinions about the carbon offset program which could be discussed at another time.

Motion to adjourn.

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

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.

ADJOURNMENT

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