

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of January 18, 2024

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 18, 2024, 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 Schlaefel (District 6), Tim Keane (At-Large), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Curt Hartog (Public Schools Representative), Steve Collin (Public Works), Sydney Schaaf (Health Department, City Trees Program Manager), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner, District 1), Katie Cashman (City Council, Ward 7).

Not in attendance:

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy (Sustainable Forestry Coordinator), Danielle Schumerth (Forestry Outreach Coordinator), Craig Pinkalla (Forestry Preservation Coordinator), Brian Crotteau (resident), Jenny Perton (resident), Mitchel Hansen (Harrison Neighborhood Association).

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair MacDonagh called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. **The MTAC meeting minutes for December 21, 2023, were approved as delivered.**

MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Ralph Sievert and Forestry Staff

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORMS

Sievert has sent out conflict of interest forms to all the MTAC members for completion. He will now send a form to the new MTAC member, Councilperson Katie Cashman (replacing Linea Palmisano) in 2024.

MPRB NEWSLETTER

Sievert shared the news of the arborists climbing and pruning during the winter in Farview Park

STUMP GRINDING

The department is proceeding with stump grinding and because of the mild weather they are getting ahead on the stumps that need deep grinding for this spring's tree planting.

CRAIG PINKALLA, TEACHING AT THE U of M

The new Urban Forestry professor has asked Pinkalla to present guest lectures sharing his extensive knowledge on tree preservation.

2024 TREE SPECIES PURCHASE PLANTING LIST

The bid specifications for 9,600 trees planned for planting were sent to the nurseries. The bids are due February 8th. The Department reviews the bids, their cost and supply. Mr. Pinkalla then manages the logistics of tree delivery.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Danielle Schumerth presented:

- Saturday March 16 a maple syrup sap boil in King Park. Supplying the equipment.
- The Department has been invited to do Tree climbing at school carnivals this spring (Windom and Waite Parks)
- Has met with Asset Management at McRae Park for tree planting locations. The date for 2024's Arbor Day celebration at McRae Park in south Minneapolis (corner of 46th Street and Chicago Avenue): the last Friday in April, April 26th from 4 to 8 pm. She welcomed any of us to join the Committee. Trees are ordered.
- The Downtown Improvement District received a grant for volunteer tree planting in public areas like the Elliot Park neighborhood.

Day in the life of an arborist

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSEiZKfpVjg&list=PLet1F7ohU_cKCu8ZrpyoM-_yYuPxwIMFe&index=3

CITY TREE UPDATES

Sidney Schaaf presented an update about the annual citywide residential tree lottery. There will be 1,000 trees available. The lottery will open on February 1st through March. Trees cost \$30 for 5-to-8-gallon tree buckets – significant discount. Planting workshops will be held. The distribution date is May 18-19 with the location to be determined.

Tree Trust will be hosting fruit tree pruning workshop on February 24th. Focusing on the Green Zones of the City.

No updates on fund distribution for the Forest Service grant, except that budget revisions are being made. Maybe April for receiving the funding. A Project Coordinator will be hired to work on the Grant management. They have had interviews recently for this position.

NATIVE TREE SPECIES PLANTING DISCUSSION¹

Sievert, Potyondy

Sievert led the discussion with the information that most of the 9,600 trees are native.

For example, linden borers on native linden trees – but there are trees like ginkgo that aren't native but neither do they have native pests.

Potyondy shared the selection process for tree location and went into detail about plantings. Diversity and resilience are two priorities for plantings. The department staff also consider the location of the planting, e.g. whether the site is considered a 'natural' area vs. a boulevard. Pinkalla

¹ See January 2, 2024 email with tree species info from Sievert. (If you want to compare with 2023 plantings look for the 2/27/23 email.)

added that the supply chain and market availability put constraints on tree selection. There are native species that would be adapted to a variety of sites (like larch) but they aren't widely available. Schlaefer mentioned that neighbors in her district are concerned about the tree species that are planted in the City and wanted to receive more background information and clarity about the process. She was wondering if there are guidelines for prioritizing native plantings.

Potyondy responded that the majority of the City's tree species are native.

Note: On January 19 Mr. Sievert sent an email with a link to a presentation that Philip Potyondy, Sustainable Forestry Coordinator, gave to the MPRB on 4/20/2022. It starts at around the 1 hour and 46-minute point (ends at around 2:15). The topic is Tree Planting & Tree Species Diversity as a Component of Climate Resiliency. This should help demonstrate how our Tree Planting Guidelines help with tree selection on a City, Neighborhood and Block scale. Be sure to listen to Commissioner questions at the end of the presentation. These discussions reveal information that directly addresses some of the topics brought up the MTAC's January 18th meeting.²

Marrari addressed Schlaefer's question if others on the MTAC are also concerned with the species that are selected for planting; yes, this has been brought forward by MTAC members before and could perhaps this could be addressed with guidelines (decision tree?) that lays out the selection process.

Schaaf mentioned that of the 2,500 trees through their program with 80-90 % native.

Willeke brought up the subject of soil types, and the mismatch between a tree species and its soil type resulting in poor performance.

MacDonagh described MnDOT's guidelines for the plantings on lands managed by the Department of Transportation.

Bolla thinks there should be a list with the reasons for selecting the trees and the possible locations would be great, and then to address cultivars because some are not good hosts to insects. MacDonagh talked about the native species that are brought into cultivation for their hardiness, for example. Potyondy addressed the variability of cultivars vs lack of.

Kruse: how to educate private property owners to plant native trees? And encourage them to plant and maintain them. This could be a goal to strive for.

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) IMPACTS: PRIVATE PROPERTY CONCERNS MPRB Commissioner Billy Menz

EAB and Property Owners' Communications

Resolution from Commissioner Musich has been approved.

Menz wants to address the scope of the resolution and to review the materials that are distributed to property owners. Designate MTAC members to be on the subcommittee.

Sersland offered to meet and lead the effort for fulfilling the resolution tasks. Sievert offered to meet with us to review the existing communications.

² <https://www.youtube.com/live/OEweBk0iSUg?si=Cx627CDoejAsNps8&t=6405>

Annual Report SubCommittee

Ms. Schlaefel offered to lead this group and requested that anyone who is interested in joining her send an email.

Mr. Sievert said that he and Mr. Potyondy had put together a report for 2023 of activities. The Annual Report doesn't have to be presented 'live' but it has more impact in that form. So, it would be worthwhile to assemble a 2023 report to distribute to commissioners and City Council members. The timing to submit doesn't have to be in September.

2023 Year in Review – a 5 minute video summarizing MPRB accomplishments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88sBKB14xAY>

MTAC BUSINESS

Co-Chair MacDonagh

MacDonagh is stepping down from his Co-Chair position, while staying on as the liaison between the MTAC and the university. MacDonagh mentioned Mr. Keane as a possible Co-Chair. Marrari will lead and Co-Chair the meetings in the interim.

Who will step up? Submit your interest in an email to Mr. Marrari.

Sersland is willing to continue as Secretary.

Mr. Nicholson brought up a subject from his meeting with the Department of Agriculture in which Mark Abramson, who has been working on EAB since its original infestation in Minnesota, was wondering if the time has come to deregulate EAB because of it being so widespread. Another topic discussed was MnDOT rules that only native species be planted on DOT rights-of-way (within the same area and latitude).

NextGen is an energy related infrastructure to move overhead powerlines to MnDOT right-of-ways. Which means no longer trees along the ROW because of the transmission lines.

MacDonagh acknowledged that in his work at MnDOT, they are being inundated with applications for transmission lines, many of which are 345 KV lines – up to 180 feet high. These locations are influenced by solar and wind installations. Nicholson added that when he asked if the utility companies would pay the state for ROW usage, and no, MnDOT won't be requiring payment.

Next meeting will be an in-person meeting. At Park headquarters in north Minneapolis near Broadway and the River Road.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary

MEETING ADDENDUM

From January 2024 Minneapolis Park newsletter:

Actions approved at recent Regular Board Meetings. Upcoming and past meeting agendas, actions and minutes are available on the [Board Meetings page](#) on our website.

RESOLUTION 2023-251: Resolution Approving An Exchange Of Permanent Easements Between The Minneapolis Park And Recreation Board And The University Of Minnesota And A Letter Of Agreement Relating To Future Commitments By The Parties, All Pursuant And Subsequent To A Letter Of Agreement Approved By The Board Of Commissioners Through Resolution 2021-204.

Resolution 2023-256: Resolution Directing Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee To Be Briefed By Staff On

- The Private Tree Removal And Treatment Processes,
- Review The Current Communication Tools,
- Help Identify Opportunities For Collaboration Between City Government And Community Partners To Ensure Accurate Science-Based Information Is Available And
- Provide Recommendations On How To Better Educate The Public On These Topics:
- The Impacts Of Invasive Pests To Trees And What The Signs Are;
- What Residents Can Do To Respond To Threats To Urban Trees On Private Property; And
- How To Navigate The Removal, Treatment And Assessment Process If They Have A Tree Or Trees On Their Property That Have Been Condemned.