

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of May 16, 2024

Held at the MPRB Headquarters and 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 16, 2024, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Giuseppe Marrari (District 2), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner, District 1), John Kruse (District 3), Mary Bolla (District 4), Carol Sersland (District 5), Barb Schlaefer (District 6), Co-Chair Tim Keane (At-Large), Ralph Sievert (MPRB Forestry Director), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Sydney Schaaf (Mpls Health Department City Trees Program Manager), Danielle Schumerth (Forestry Outreach Coordinator), Curt Hartog (Public Schools Representative).

Not in attendance: Chris Linde (District 1), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Katie Cashman (City Council, Ward 7), Steve Collin (Public Works), Peter MacDonagh (U of M liaison).

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy¹ (Sustainability Coordinator), Angela Gupta (U of M Extension).

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair Marrari called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. **The MTAC meeting minutes for March 21 and April 18, 2024, were approved as delivered.**

CLIMATE READY WOODLANDS

Angela Gupta

Gupta is with the University of Minnesota, Extension, Rochester.

Her intro remarks centered around Street Tree Diversity, also invasive species prevention, and how fast the projected increase in the number of warmer days, and precipitation amount are occurring.

Gupta followed up with solutions (methodology) that can be implemented to identify species that can thrive under the new conditions. With discussion around climate resilient tree species that may be considered "native" ("rewilding").

z.umn.edu/ClimateReady

Gupta ended with an example of a Rochester woodlot where invasive species had been removed and native species were returning!

Questions and discussion ensued.

John Kruse mentioned an author/researcher named Doug Tallamy "Not by Accident" who advocates for native species. Gupta replied that his ideas have been referenced in the development of their work.

¹ Arborators in the Star Tribune on May 5th: <https://www.startribune.com/meet-the-twin-cities-only-tree-climbing-brass-band/600362992/>

Another take-away message: When we steward trees, they do better. This was in reference to the hardships downtown street trees confront.

She sent the presentation via email to Co-Chair Marrari.

MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE
Ralph Sievert and Forestry Staff

2024 TREE PLANTING

Tree planting start date of April 8. 9,600 trees planted by early June.

Volunteer overtime watering (by staff) will be reviewed based on conditions.

New arborist starts Monday and then another, and then fully staffed.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Danielle Schumerth reported on the Department's outreach efforts):

- Tree planting with DID
- Watering parties every 2nd Saturday in the Elliot Park area
- Memorial planting for Robert Skafte (who was murdered near Loring Park last December), and a ceremony was held.
- Seward Neighborhood Day – watering with kids.
- Two school carnivals upcoming with watering brigade and climbing (Pillsbury and Waite Park)
- Tree climbing with Whittier neighborhood youth + watering
- Promoting the job aspect when attending youth activities
- This weekend will be Minneapolis tree distribution...Elmer and Ask-the-arborist in attendance.
- MnSTAC is tabling at the Festival of Trees in Maple Plain
- Arbor Day pivoted from Friday to Thursday because of the weather predicted. Don't know the number of folks attending....maybe 1,000. The main commemorative tree was planted in honor of Sievert's 30 years of service – a St. Croix elm!

Job description for Sievert's replacement (Forestry Department) has been approved and will be posted in May. Discussion around the recruitment process ensued.

CITY TREE PROGRAM (Department of Health) UPDATES

Schaaf reported:

Residential tree sale and distribution will be held May 18-19. 1,000 containerized trees.

Finalizing the federal grant program and initiating activities in the next month and a half. With workshops.

Hiring: Tree Outreach Coordinator position to be posted May 17.

Create a new Community Forestry position.

Outreach RFP to be posted. Closes last week in May.

Forestry Corps person has represented the department at various events.

Now that the money/funding has been received, Do condemnations go off pause? July 1st is the goal for applications to be ready for tree removal and replacement process.

Would the Green Team be a good group to present to the MTAC? Yes.

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) IMPACTS: PRIVATE PROPERTY CONCERNS
MPRB Commissioner Menz and MTAC member Sersland

Sersland reported for the Subcommittee.

Subcommittee meetings have wrapped up. A summary of some of the recommendations: Initial contact improvement, follow up with residents improved – and that treatment of ash trees may be an option, and outreach to those who may have an ash on their property.

The main recommendations have been forwarded to the Forestry and Health Department as well as the 15 additional recommendations. Subcommittee work is completed as the work is transitioned to the Forestry Department and Health Department.

MPRB staff will review so the MTAC can take action. Then put the document on the MTAC agenda. Can be as simple as a petition and communication to the MPRB.

Will the additional 15 recommendations from a group of individual citizens be included? They have been reviewed. Schaaf and the Department of Health continue to work with the group. Comment was made that the level of detail could be reviewed for feasibility.

ANNUAL REPORT PREPARATION
MTAC member Schlaefer and Marrari

Giuseppe addressed the progress for the annual meeting report development.

Schlaefer and Marrari are working with Forestry staff to prepare the report contents.

MTAC BUSINESS
Co-Chair Marrari

Any further feedback regarding the tree nursery tour? It was a valuable trip. Another alternative would be to take the van and review various sites pertinent to the work of the Forestry Department.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary