

# MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of August 15, 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 August 15, 2024, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Giuseppe Marrari (District 2), Billy Menz (MPRB Commissioner, District 1), Chris Linde (District 1), Co-Chair Tim Keane (At-Large), Philip Potyondy (Sustainability Coordinator), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Sydney Schaaf (Mpls Health Department City Trees Program Manager), Peter MacDonagh (U of M liaison), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative).

Not in attendance: Mary Bolla (District 4), Carol Sersland (District 5), Barb Schlaefer (District 6), Katie Cashman (City Council, Ward 7), Steve Collin (Public Works), Danielle Schumerth (Forestry Outreach Coordinator), Curt Hartog (Public Schools Representative).

Guests in attendance:

## CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair Marrari called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Review of the **MTAC meeting minutes for July 18, 2024, were postponed until the September 19 meeting when there are anticipated to be more commissioners in attendance.**

You can copy the recording information below and share with others

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/b9R0Yr0F-jk2a9kISKOmERmNQqzDDMP4JYEwHFBeUu-zSBHxNwXhJjhZqgoCaEc.OVhoXI7g2qSTyRen?startTime=1723760780000>

Passcode: v?Y6.=+P

## MPRB FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

**Philip Potyandy and Forestry Staff**

### PARK BOARD UNION MEMBER STRIKE

363 staff were on strike in July (arborists, crew leaders, tree inspectors, park keepers). They settled and returned to work at the end of July.

### STORM RESPONSE

There has been a lot of storm clean up to complete. Some statistics: 800 inspections related to storm work, 600 debris piles picked up or waiting, 350 trees pruned, 275 tree removals, much left to do.

### TREE CONDEMNATIONS AND GRANT PROCESS

The process has been getting set up for implementation. They have the city grant application running and the tree removal contracts in place. The software has been redeveloped to keep track of applicants that have been approved for Grant funds. The tree inspectors are getting back into their role of finding and inspecting diseased (Dutch elm) and infested trees on private property.

A comment was made about the pause that happened in the tree condemnation process while the agency was working on finding funding – this pause has resulted in a large amount of elm trees, e.g., that they are not being able to move as quickly as they would like. Going forward, keep in mind that pausing the condemnation process be used as a last resort. We should be thinking about this in terms of the next possible pest that may arrive.

The rain this summer has been amazing for the urban forest. Newer trees are becoming established with great amounts of new growth.

#### DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY POSITION

The Forestry Director's position is moving forward. Currently there is no interim director.

#### OUTREACH

Outreach: watering parties in partnership with Franklin Street and Curry Park. There's been great turnout, and the kids love the hands-on engagement, also Riverside, Stevens Corner, Lake Hiawatha. In September there will be outreach activities at Longfellow River Gorge, BioBlitz at Minnehaha Park, St. Helena's Autumn Daze, watering parties at Curry Park.

Willeke posed the question of whether the subject of pausing tree condemnations and the harmful effect it has on the urban forest should be included in the Annual Report. This was discussed and for a variety of reasons we'll understand the detrimental effects to trees, and that the challenging situation was handled as best possible. In the future, try to get information distributed and understood earlier to improve the process.

### **CITY TREE PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH UPDATE** **Sydney Schaaf**

The Health Department has received the Hennepin County Healthy Tree Canopy Grant. The goal is to pursue a private property tree preservation ordinance with this funding. They will be hiring a consultant to lead this effort as the current staff capacity isn't able to take this on. The RFP for this will be released September 6<sup>th</sup>. The general idea is to preserve trees, especially during development and new construction on private property. No decisions have been made, with the consultants tasked to bring in other city departments, MPRB, and MTAC.

The Department is in the process of hiring the Tree Outreach Coordinator as well as the Community Forester with them starting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The fall tree sale is open now with fruit, shade, and evergreen trees available for \$30. The Department is working with the Russell Herder ad agency to promote the sale. The agency is helping the Health Department promote different programs in the Climate Legacy Initiative. They have assembled graphics and information that is being shared on social media. They also assembled a Neighborhood Association toolkit that includes flyers, an email template that people can send out. **Schaaf will share these items with the MTAC.** It could be adapted to share with other networks.

MacDonagh mentioned that Nicholson has been a part of many tree preservation ordinances and should be included in this process. Keene has as well, in his capacity as a consulting attorney for cities.

## FOLLOW UP

The City Trees Outreach for proposals were posted in May. These funds are part of the federal grant. Community outreach – could be awarded to up to 5 organizations. Five organizations were awarded:

1. Metro Blooms Award \$80,650
2. Resilient Cities and Communities Award \$90,000
3. Strength in Community Award \$75,000
4. Birch Tree Care Award \$23,333.48
5. Harrison Neighborhood Association Award \$31,000

Residents' applications for the Condemned Tree Assistance Program started on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tree outreach coordinator, posted on May 17<sup>th</sup>, will start on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
Community Forester, was open through July 12<sup>th</sup>, will start on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## ANNUAL REPORT PREPARATION

### Marrari

Marrari presented the Annual Report development. The Report is scheduled to be presented to the MPRB (on August 21)<sup>1</sup> and eventually presented to the City Council (September 25<sup>th</sup> Public Health and Safety). **Schaaf will set this up with the Council.**

Willeke will make a “quick” presentation to the Mayor in the future.

A question was raised about the use of the carbon offset funds and the role of “Green Minneapolis” (now known as “Green City Accord”). Further clarification could be investigated. There are two administrative costs: most of the funds are going to MPRB.

The MTAC thanked Marrari and Schlaefer for putting this report together.

## MTAC GENERAL BUSINESS

### Marrari

Marrari posed the question: is this the year that MTAC members are supposed to reapply for the MTAC? MacDonagh acknowledged that this is the year for most of the commission to reapply as it is the end of the two-year commitment.

## ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted: Carol Sersland – Commission Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> See link for video of presentation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_QpTth6L0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_QpTth6L0)