

MINNEAPOLIS TREE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2025

Held in person 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 January 16, 2025, at the MPRB Headquarters, with the following Commission Members in attendance: Co-Chair Giuseppe Marrari (District 2), Drew Peterson (District 1), Karl Kussow (District 3), Mary Bolla (District 4), Co-Chair Tim Keane (District 5), Barb Schlaefer (District 6), Erika Commers (At Large), Steve Nicholson (MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee), Don Willeke (Mayor's Representative), Steve Collin (Public Works), Katie Cashman (City Council, Ward 7), Meg Forney (MPRB Commissioner), Peter MacDonagh (U of M Liaison), Sydney Schaaf (Mpls Health Department City Trees Program Manager), Curt Hartog (Public Schools Representative).

Guests in attendance: Philip Potyondy (Sustainability Coordinator), Carol Sersland, Mitchel Hansen (Harrison neighborhood), Shakin Khalili, Health Department Forester.

CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES

Co-Chair Marrari called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. **The MTAC meeting minutes for December 19, 2024, were approved as submitted.**

INTRODUCTION AND APPOINTMENTS

Co-Chair Marrari went around the meeting with introductions of all in attendance. Co-Chair Keane moved the reappointment of Marrari and Keane as co-chairs. Second by Willeke, motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Keane moved the nomination of Barb Schlaefer to serve as secretary. Schlaefer declined but agreed to think about it. Keane volunteered to assist preparation of meeting minutes with Co-Chair Marrari.

MPRB FORESTRY UPDATE

Philip Potyondy. Potyondy provided an update on the selection of MPRB forester position starting the end of February.

- **ACTION:** Will bring up at the next meeting (Feb 20)
- New Forestry director is starting end of Feb
 - Expect director to attend March 20 meeting
 - Tree Care professional position was discussed
 - **ACTION:** Sydney will follow up with her contacts regarding this role, may have interested parties
 - Business Development representative position was discussed
 - **ACTION:** Follow up with Philip and "Kit", need to understand if there is still interest in serving
 - **ACTION:** Discuss Tree Care Professional and Business/Development representative with Forestry Director in March
- Forestry was asked about
 - Tree keeper and how the city tracks trees
 - A general idea on how trees are replaced, what trees are chosen (diversity)
 - **ACTION:** Ask Forestry to present a small presentation on the above topics

CITY TREES UPDATE

- Shahin asked for ideas on where Tree Trust can distribute trees
- **ACTION:** Follow up with Sydney/Shahin and Jim Dutton regarding presentation on Biochar
- Events to consider
 - Arbor Day
 - Tree Lot Tour (April with Craig Pinkala)

2025-26 MTAC GOALS DISCUSSION

- Topics to discuss and perhaps break into subcommittees (Please note subcommittees should be able to deliver action items and a plan to present to the park board)
 - Annual Report
 - Budget for tree planting and stump grinding
 - Park usage and compensating for damage to trees
 - Natural Areas
 - Protection
 - Preservation
 - Maintenance
 - Improvement
 - Fill the vacant seats in MTAC
 - [Meg Forney] Be proactive in Blue Line Extension Project
 - Be involved in planning, and understanding the tree impact (Involve Craig Pinkala)
 - [Meg Forney] Discuss memorial trees and benches and expand the program's visibility.
 - [Tim Keane] Advocacy towards public groups and getting them to give more credence to the importance of trees through canopy preservation and expansion
 - [Tim Keane] Advocate for a MPRB position that searches for grants and funding for MPRB projects RELATED TO TREE EXPANSION
 - **Address how to improve tree preservation through relationships with Met Council, Hennepin County, MnDOT etc. This issue was identified in the annual report and two city council reps and one MPRB commissioner showed interest in helping us build those bridges.**

ADJOURNMENT

The MTAC Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Motion by Willeke, second by Schlaefer to adjourn meeting to February 20, 2025.

Respectfully submitted: Tim Keane and Giuseppe Marrari – MTAC Co-Chairs