

## **TREE COMMISSION COUNCIL UPDATE – APRIL 19, 2022**

Good evening, Mayor and Councilors. It has almost been exactly one year since the Tree Commission has provided an update to council. Because of the ongoing Covid emergency the Tree Commission, like council continue to meet in a virtual zoom environment.

All tree removal permits are reviewed by the Tree Commission and approved by Staff Advisor. With the exception of street trees all tree removal permits are processed as a type 1 land use action with notice to the surrounding neighborhood. In calendar year 2021 the Community Development Dept. processed 41 Tree removal permits. These numbers were very similar to previous two years 42 in 2020 and 45 in 2019.

In addition to the tree removal permits the Tree commission also has reviewed 14 different planning actions including both site design review and physical and environmental constraint applications. During this review process the Tree Commission both review the proposed removals but also how the project has addressed tree preservation as well as reviewing replanting and landscaping plans for proper species selection.

In a typical year, the Tree Commission would also be involved with Earth Day, and other outreach activities, but with the pandemic we did not have any of these types of events for a second year.

Next, I would like to highlight a few projects that the tree commission did manage to accomplish this year:

### **Tree City USA**

The city of Ashland continues to participate in the Tree City USA program and the Tree Commission is very pleased to announce that, in partnership with the Parks Department staff, Ashland was recertified as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the 37<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. We are one of 67 Tree Cities in Oregon, and one of only 9 to have held this honor for more than 30 years. Part of the application includes reporting on city wide tree care activities and in this years application between both parks and cemetery 48 new trees were planted and nearly 400 were pruned.

### **Tree Plotter Inventory**

Another project that we are excited about is our continuing effort to inventory our urban forest. Last year we told you about a project called the Tree Plotter Inventory or TPI. For assorted reasons this project didn't move forward, however because of it conversation were started with our GIS Department (for those who don't know GIS stands for Geographic Information System). In collaboration with GIS we are exploring an 'off the shelf' application that is included in our

enterprise license from ERSI. It has many features to inventory and track the urban forest. Additionally our GIS team has created a file that is derived from LIDAR showing the location of most of all of the trees in the city. Now we simply need to inventory them We haven't had an opportunity to bring it live yet but hope to do so later this year.

### **Tree of the Year**

Another activity that the tree commission does each year is the nomination and election of a Tree of the Year. Typically, this is promoted in part by flyers that are handed out at the Community Development front counter, which affected the number of entries. This year we advertised in city source, the city's web page and facebook. A total of 11 nominations were received, and voting is online now and will continue until the end of the month. The URL is [gis.ashland.or.us/treeofyear2021/](http://gis.ashland.or.us/treeofyear2021/), and there is also a link from the tree commission web page. At the time of this writing the Cork tree at 233 4<sup>th</sup> St. is in the lead with 22 votes.

### **Arbor day – First week of April, 2021**

Finally, we would like to highlight Arbor Day. Arbor day is celebrated nationally on April 24<sup>th</sup>, but each state celebrates arbor week on an appropriate date based on local climate. In Oregon we celebrate Arbor week the first full week of April (4-8). Also each year since 2020 Oregon's Governor has proclaimed the entire month of April as Oregon Arbor Month.

Thank you Mayor Akins for reading the Arbor Day proclamation, especially considering it is one of the requirements for us to apply for our 38<sup>th</sup> year of Tree city USA.

Lastly, the Tree Commission encourages everyone interested in trees to attend our monthly meetings which are on the Thursday before Planning Commission meetings at 6:00 p.m. and continue to be held virtually via zoom but we hope to return to in person meetings soon. There are currently vacancies on the Commission, and anyone interested in being on the Tree Commission can find an application on the City's website or through the City Recorder's office.

Thank you for your time.



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\*\*\* OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION \*\*\*

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**WHEREAS** in 1872, the Nebraska Board of Agriculture established a special day to be set aside for the planting of trees, *and*

**WHEREAS** this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, *and*

**WHEREAS** Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, *and*

**WHEREAS** trees can be a solution to combating climate change by reducing the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting heating and cooling costs, moderating the temperature, cleaning the air, producing life-giving oxygen, and providing habitat for wildlife, *and*

**WHEREAS** trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, *and*

**WHEREAS** trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, *and*

**WHEREAS** trees — wherever they are planted — are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, \_\_\_\_\_, Mayor of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim \_\_\_\_\_ as **ARBOR DAY**

In the City of \_\_\_\_\_, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, *and*

**FURTHER,** I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

**DATED THIS** \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_