



CITY OF ASHLAND



TREE COMMISSION MEETING March 7, 2019

Tree Commissioners:	Parks Liaison
Christopher John	Peter Baughman
Asa Cates	
Cat Gould – Absent	Staff Present:
Eric Simpson	Derek Severson
Russell Neff	Aaron Anderson
Council Liaison	
Steven Jensen - Absent	

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Christopher John called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room of the Community Development and Engineering Services Building located at 51 Winburn Way.

Also present: Ashland Parks Commissioner Mike Gardiner, Parks Superintendent/Oregon Community Trees Board Member Mike Oxendine, Wildfire Commissioner Dan Dawson, and members of the public Joanne Eggers, Julie Norman and Bryan Holley.

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Severson explained that there was an error in the identification of exhibits in the draft minutes, and that the previous 'Exhibit B' was not submitted and the reference should be removed, and the previous 'Exhibit C' should then be re-labeled as 'Exhibit B.'

Cates asked that the previous language with regard to the Fourth Street tree removal should be clarified to make clear that the Commission was not in favor of the removal but recognized that local Public Works or federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards might necessitate that the tree be removed.

***Cates/Simpson m/s to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2019 regular meeting as amended.
Voice vote: All Ayes.***

III. **ANNOUNCEMENTS & LIAISON REPORTS**

- Council Liaison Stephen Jensen was not present
- Parks & Recreation Liaison discussed the future removal of two Spruce trees in Lithia Park, explain that one was in declining health and the other was leaning. He noted that the trees were located across from the band shell on Winburn Way and were identified with pink ribbon.
- Community Development Liaison Derek Severson:
 - Introduced new Assistant Planner Aaron Anderson
 - Noted that there were no updates on new member appointments...
 - Discussed 4th Street Tree Removal Permit in front of Noble Coffee and suggested that the Commission meet with Planning, Parks and Public Works to discuss potential improvements to the process and to the Recommended Street Tree Guide. He noted that he would see if Public Works staff were available to attend the April meeting.

IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Julie Norman/596 Helman Street. Ms. Norman asked whether large, healthy, mature trees are considered an asset, financial or otherwise. She proposed to designate the 12 Douglas Firs by the Japanese Garden as Heritage Trees. She showed photos from the book "Lithia Park: The Heart and

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Soul of Ashland” by John Enders Book which depicted the 1914 Maclaren Plan for the park, and photos showing the trees shortly after planting.

Bryan Holley/324 Liberty Street. Mr. Holley encouraged the commission to ask to review the annual Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) project list from Public Works. He recognized that Parks Commissioner Mike Gardiner was in attendance, and read aloud the code exemption relative to tree removals in parks. He indicated his feeling that the use of this exemption did not match the spirit in which the Tree Ordinance was drafted, and suggested that he felt there was a broken relationship with Parks Commission that needs to be repaired.

Dan Dawson/818 Liberty Street. Member of Wildfire Safety Commission, attempting to attend Tree Commission meetings to help with the overlap of conflicting goals. Trying to head off potential conflicts in the future with new Wildfire Management Ordinance relative to new construction and landscaping. He noted that the Wildfire Safety Commission meets 11- 1 every 3rd Wed of the month at Fire Station 1.

V. PRESENTATION

Parks Superintendent and Oregon Community Trees board member Mike Oxendine made a short presentation. He explained that the Oregon Department of Forestry oversee the Tree City and Tree campus USA programs within Oregon. He noted that Ashland was recently approved for 34th consecutive year as a Tree City. Talked about his attendance at a Tree Commission conference where there was discussion of making sure Tree Commissions follow uniform protocols and noted that Ashland was frequently used as an example. He presented handouts for tree protection during construction as well as a number of International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) handouts.

He noted that Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission has formed a new sub-committee focused on current parks conservation and maintenance, and that they are looking to provide education, prepare a tree care policy, and hope to work with the Tree Commission and help with outreach. He will be offering a tree pruning class for Parks staff and interested members of the public and subsequently will offer a tree removal class.

He discussed the Tree City USA “Growth Award” for cities with at least five years of Tree City status that go above and beyond to recognize tree care, outreach, tree preservation, etc. He noted that cities with ten “Growth Awards” gain Platinum Status and a new sign. He suggested that the City of Ashland just needs to document what it does to receive this award.

Oxendine discussed the Wildfire Ordinance and the Climate Energy Action Plan, indicating that he hoped parks present an opportunity to help with large conifer mitigation; he suggested there could be a fund for mitigation through Parks. Severson noted that he would need to look into the existing Tree Fund and how Parks might draw from it.

Oxendine discussed the 2019 Southern Oregon Regional Tree Climbing Championship, noted that the 2018 event hosted 500+ attendees. He explained that the 2019 SORTC will be held in Lithia Park on May 18th (NOTE: This date has subsequently changed to May 11th). He indicated that they are looking for qualified volunteers with an arboricultural background to assist with the event.

Oxendine discussed that Oregon Community Trees would be hosting an annual conference on June 6th at the World Forestry Center in Portland. He explained that the theme is “Making room for Trees,” and that Oxendine and Baughman were to attend and they wanted to encourage others to plan to attend as well.

Oxendine discussed planned events for Arbor Day on April 5th at noon which would include planting Oak trees at Oak Knoll Golf Course. He explained they had applied for and received a \$500 grant from Oregon Community Trees and Plant Oregon to provide the trees. The Mayor will read proclamation for Arbor Day, and he encouraged Council and APRC members to attend. A new Tree City USA sign will be put up, and he concluded that Oak Knoll Golf Course is seeking Audubon accreditation.

VI. TYPE I REVIEWS

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None.

VII. TYPE II REVIEWS

None.

VIII. STREET TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

None.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Tree City USA – Severson noted that as indicated in the e-mail sent recently, the City’s Tree of the Year status was recently renewed for the 34th straight year.

Tree of the Year – Severson noted that the “Tree of the Year 2019” voting was now live on the city website and paper ballots were also available in the Planning Department lobby. He distributed paper ballots, noting that voting would be through April 3rd and the winners would be announced April 5th at the Arbor Day planting event at Oak Knoll.

Annual City Council Update (7 p.m. on March 19th) – Severson noted that the packet included a staff draft of the update, and that he would be present with Chair John for the presentation to Council on March 19th at 7:00 p.m. The city’s Arbor Week Proclamation would be read at that meeting. All members were encouraged to attend.

Arbor Day/Week Activities (12 p.m. to 2 p.m. on April 5th) – Severson explained that Oxendine had already addressed these activities.

Rogue Valley Earth Day event tabling (11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 20th) – Severson noted that he would finalize registration and understood that Gould, John and Cates would be tabling. He encouraged others to attend as well...

July 4th Alternate Meeting Date – A “Doodle Poll” will be sent shortly to try to identify an alternative meeting date and time since the July meeting date is a federal holiday.

Commissioners discussed Bryan Holley’s concerns about the relationship between the Commission and Parks. Cates asked “Is one incident a broken relationship?” and suggested that he was not bothered or surprised that another Commission did not take an advisory recommendation, and concluded that he has faith in Oxendine and feels the relationship between the Commission and Parks is strong. John stated that developing more liaison relationships between Commissions will help, and indicated that he does not feel there is an issue. He emphasized that he did not feel that AP&RC was trying to hide anything and he wants dialogue to continue. Baughman agreed that keeping the two Commissions informed was the best policy.

Severson noted that he would approach the Public Works Director to see if Public Works staff could come to next meeting to discuss street trees and sidewalks.

X. ADJOURNMENT: John adjourned the meeting at 7:09p.m. Severson noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 4th at 6:00 p.m.