

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

The Chairman Pro Tem, Shannon Laurenzi, called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Alex Boccabella; Megan Engelmann; Shannon Laurenzi; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Liesa Wetzig

ABSENT:

Mary Berges; Chair Richard Varga (Non-Voting Member)

Others in Attendance: Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council

MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Wetzig to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, January 10, 2024, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Engelmann, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes".

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

DISCUSSION OF A TREE COMMISSION BANNER – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi said that she was hoping to have a little more information this evening. The banner is on a website called Canva and she tried to log into it but had problems with that. Brian Fischer offered to do a free copy for us but that was before our Arbor Day celebration and since we are not rushed for that now she thought she would have everybody take a look at it and see if anybody wanted to make any changes before we do the prints. It is not very expensive to make a banner so if we wanted to do a couple of different ones, that would be ok too. She said she needs to figure out how to get into that website a bit easier, so she will bring that to the next meeting or maybe she will email it out to everybody beforehand so we can take a look at it.

DISCUSSION OF A GIRL SCOUT TROOP ATTENDING THE MARCH MEETING OF THE TREE COMMISSION TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024 – Ms. Engelmann

Ms. Engelmann thanked the Commission for being open to having the Girl Scout Service Unit here next month. She said that she made some notes on some things that she thought might be valuable to touch on while they are here. In general her thought was just to introduce the Commission. Again, the reason for having them here is World Thinking Day which talks a little bit about how we can impact the environment, specifically in our own communities. As we all know, Girl Scouts is a girl-strong organization and she thinks that it is really valuable that we have a lot of women on this Commission. A lot of young girls, and kids in general, have never been to City Hall so she thought just being able to come to a Commission meeting and see how it works and see that you can be involved in your community on all different types of levels is also very valuable. At the very end of the meeting, she thought we would talk

about Avon's official tree. She was hoping to get some sort of a graphic or possibly a picture up on the TV. Ms. Wetzig said that she was sure that Mr. Varga has something that Ms. Engelman can put up on the overhead and Ms. Engelmann said that would be great.

Ms. Engelmann said that the age range for Girl Scouts in our community is generally first grade through high school. The age range of those that have RSVP'd about coming to the meeting next month is 4th grade through 7th grade, so she would like to do a little bit of participation with the audience. She said that she read some facts about the Avon American beech tree that we have at the Aquatic Center and she saw that it was 119 inches in circumference so she thought it might be kind of fun to pull in some girls in a circle and figure out big that is and talk about how old the tree is, how it got there, etc. And then at the very end, she was going to have an easel at the back of the room with a display board on it that encourages the girls to think about things that might make their community or neighborhood a better place. And invite them to make notes on it themselves, draw pictures, etc. – just hands-on things that can generate some thought before they leave the building. Everyone thought these ideas sounded great.

UPDATE ON THE TREE RING DISPLAY PROJECT – Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith stated that Mr. Varga has the cross section from the black locust tree and he has experimented on it with different chemicals that stained the tree rings and he is still in that process. He is out of town right now but when he gets back, he is going to continue with that and Mr. Smith is going to join him and they will see what the best results are and then go from there. And we have Bob Cutler Sign Co. in N. Ridgeville that can help us actually make the display. So the project is still in progress and we will make it happen.

UPDATE ON THE LORAIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT APPLICATION – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi stated that she received an email from Mary Berges that the Avon Tree Commission is in the process of applying for a grant with the Lorain County Public Health. The application is for the construction of walking paths in the Traxler Family Arboretum. The award is \$10,000 if we are awarded it which would pay for about 800 ft. of paved trails. The deadline for the grant is February 19th and March 4th is when the applicants are notified of the approved proposal. Ms. Berges has submitted everything with Rose Seighman, the Mayor's Assistant, and taken care of all that. So hopefully we will know at our next meeting in March when we receive an update from Ms. Berges if we received the grant or not.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Boccabella stated that he contacted Urban Forester Matt Leiden regarding the Freshman Tree Academy and Mr. Leiden informed him that they will not be having the Academy this year. They are going to take the year off to update the class so if anyone was considering doing it, it is not going to happen for another year. Then on another note, Mr. Boccabella said that he did sign up for the North Coast Urban Forestry Conference on March 7th and if anyone else is going he would be more than happy to give them a ride. Ms. Laurenzi said that she thought she would sign up as well. Mr. Boccabella said he believed that the deadline is this Friday. Mr. Smith said, yes, you want to sign up with Rose Seighman.

Mr. Smith stated that he had a few things that Mr. Varga wanted him to mention tonight. First, the Arbor Day Foundation in Lincoln, Nebraska, sent Mr. Varga a form asking what we do to celebrate Arbor Day so Mr. Varga filled that out and returned it. The Arbor Day Foundation just wanted to know what is happening across the country.

Mr. Smith said also, Matt Leiden, our Regional Urban Forester, said there is something called a Junior Tree Commission member where you have a high school student on the Tree Commission. They would be a non-voting member but the idea is to get the youth in the political process so that is something we need to think about. Mr. Smith thought it is a great idea to have a teen-ager on our Commission.

Mr. Smith said, in regard to the Arbor Day Celebration, Mr. Varga would like to have families purchase a tree as a memorial or a dedication celebration just like our Parks Department offers and on the day of our Arbor Day, the families would actually come and plant their trees. The hole would already be dug and we might get the 10-gallon trees like the "Hearts of Gold" Mr. Smith planted two years ago. So you would have families planting trees there and there would be the little stone plaques for the dedications. It would get more people involved. And that would be something we would want to advertise if we get a Tree Commission newsletter going or in the City newsletter or put it on the City website where the Tree Commission has a link. And that would be fun on Arbor Day – people planting trees. We would want to go up to the park and make kind of a master tree-planting plan so we know what areas we want the public to plant these trees vs. areas we want the City to do it. So at some point, Mr. Varga is going to organize a scouting mission and all of the Tree Commission members are invited to be part of that.

Mr. Smith said, also, Mr. Varga suggested for the Traxler Family Arboretum, that we need to brainstorm on how to set it up if people want to donate money there, say to buy a bench or a tree, or help pay for paving a trail, etc. Or for instance, we have the Avon Garden Club or Davey Tree right here in town and they might actually mark off a plot of the Arboretum and maintain it and then they can have a plaque there saying this is maintained by them. So Mr. Varga wants to promote donating, whether it is money or people actually doing their own projects at the Arboretum. He feels that there is a lot of untapped potential out there; people are very much wanting to donate to causes like the Traxler Family Arboretum. So just keep the thoughts going.

Mr. Smith stated that the last thing on his list from Mr. Varga was a reminder that this Friday is the last day to sign up for the North Coast Urban Forestry Conference. He is going, and Mr. Traxler, Mr. Varga, Ms. Berges, and Mr. Boccabella are all going, and hopefully Ms. Laurenzi.

Mr. Traxler stated that he just wanted to add that it is a great idea of having families plant memorial or dedication trees at the Aquatic Center and we need to do whatever we can do to promote that as we go on. And finding the spots where we are going to plant the trees is important.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Wetzig to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Engelmann, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes".

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chairman Pro Tem declared the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council