

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, April 9, 2025

The Chairman Rick Varga, called the meeting to order at 7:33 P.M.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Mary Johnson; Olivia Pajak (non-voting Student Member); Matt Smith; John Traxler; Liesa Wetzig; Chair, Richard Varga (non-voting Member)

Others in Attendance: Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council

Absent: Megan Englemann; Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Johnson to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, March 12, 2025, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "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.

MOTION TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Traxler to amend the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Monday, December 16, 2024, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes".

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

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Johnson to approve the minutes as amended of the Special Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Monday, December 16, 2024, and the vote was: Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes".

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

DISCUSSION OF RE-SCHEDULING THE TREE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025, AT 7:30 P.M.

Mr. Varga

Mr. Varga advised the Commission would like to change the Regular Meeting scheduled for May 14, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. to May 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., as he believes there is a Board of Zoning and Appeals meeting that same night at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Boccabella asked if any other days than a Wednesday would be an option or would it have to take place on a Wednesday. Mr. Varga advised he is not aware if the meeting would have to be on a Wednesday. Mr. Varga noted they would have to make sure they are done with their meeting prior to the other meeting starting. He added they simply want to put the finishing touches on the Tree City USA event as they will be setting up for the event the day prior to when the Regular Meeting

is normally held. Mr. Boccabella confirmed the time would be 6:00 p.m. and Mr. Varga confirmed that is correct.

MOTION TO APPROVE RE-SCHEDULING THE TREE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025, AT 7:30 P.M. TO WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Berges to re-schedule the Regular Meeting of the Tree Commission from Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. to Wednesday May 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. and the vote was: Mr. Smith, “yes”; Mr. Traxler, “yes”; Ms. Wetzig, “yes”; Ms. Berges, “yes”; Mr. Boccabella, “yes”; Ms. Johnson, “yes”.

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

DISCUSSION OF AVON HOSTING THE TREE CITY USA EVENT IN MAY 2025

Mr. Varga & Ms. Wetzig

➤ **Sponsors and Vendors**

Ms. Wetzig stated presently they have 74 people including the vendors attending the Tree City USA event. She stated hopefully they will get some more people to register for the event and noted she received an additional two registrations earlier in the day and has a list of the cities if anyone wishes to review that information. She noted they have Bartlett Tree Experts and Petitti Family Farms as platinum sponsors, Bur Oak as a silver sponsor. She noted EverArbor indicated they would be a vendor but she has yet to receive payment. Ms. Wetzig stated she was discussing the raffle tickets with Mr. Smith and instead of using the tickets from the previous roll she would make tickets on card stock and it would state, “enter to win” and include the name, and email address. She feels this could be an easier way.

Ms. Wetzig stated she was in contact with Joe Moeglin, Urban Forester – East Central Region, regarding the list of cities. She noted she is going to include the Commission’s anniversary dates as well and submit that information to Paula Pitasky at Encompass Marketing. Ms. Wetzig stated Ms. Pitasky has the artwork from most of the vendors and sponsors except Rusty Oak and EverArbor. Mr. Traxler stated he contacted Ohio Machinery, and they showed some interest. Ms. Wetzig stated Mr. Varga has been in conversations with Willoway Nurseries but has not received any additional feedback on whether they would increase their sponsorship in addition to PineHaven Greenhouse Inc.

Mr. Varga advised that he went to the Willoway Nurseries distribution center where they have their wholesale operations for companies like Davis Tree Farm and other landscape companies. He added he provided the Commission’s information to the representative of Willoway Nurseries who indicated they could pass the Commission’s information along to those who pass through. Mr. Varga noted hopefully they will get additional responses but felt that it was a good avenue to explore.

➤ **Registration**

It was discussed that Mr. Varga will reach out to Mr. Leiden to touch base in regard to sending out emails for the Tree City USA event. Mr. Varga noted that Mr. Leiden referenced sending emails out last Wednesday but will follow-up with him.

Ms. Wetzig stated she called Maureen Nakonek at Rocky River as they had not heard from them regarding their registration and Ms. Nakonek advised she did not receive a registration form. Ms. Wetzig advised Ms. Nakonek that the registration forms were sent on a prior date. Mr. Varga also noted there also are many situations where there are late registrations.

➤ Menu

Mr. Varga inquired about the date that the menu needs to be submitted to Tom's Country Place and Ms. Wetzig responded by April 15th. Mr. Varga stated that Ms. Englemann was unable to attend tonight's meeting but relayed that she had samples of the centerpieces and would send a photo to the Commission. Mr. Varga also relayed that Ms. Englemann felt that boneless roasted chicken and top round beef with green beans and a three cheese macaroni, salad, dressings, roll, would be good options to offer for the menu entrees.

Ms. Berges felt that since macaroni and cheese and green beans are being offered that she is good with the menu for vegetarian options and the only question she had was about a dessert. She did not see dessert listed on the information they received from Tom's Country Place and inquired if that was an extra cost. Ms. Wetzig stated she believes it is an extra cost. Mr. Varga noted the menu states to ask your event coordinator for details regarding dessert. He added it also notes an assortment of pastries are available to be served after lunch or dinner.

Ms. Wetzig stated they have the continental breakfast at \$8.95 per person, which includes pastries, fresh fruit, coffee and juices. Mr. Varga felt they could always inquire about additional options if needed. He stated when they attended the Urban Forestry conference on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at Tri-C they had a continental breakfast but he does not recall if there was a lot of food left over but believes it can be overdone.

Mr. Boccabella stated as of right now they have 74 people signed up to attend. Ms. Wetzig stated that it does not include the Commission Members. He added at 85 people, do they think they are going to hit 200 people realistically. Mr. Varga stated all of those cities in the East Central area have not responded at all, so he is still thinking they are going to get 200 people. Mr. Varga stated they are going to keep sending emails out to people and they still have a month left. He stated if it worked out where they had some extra money, they would like to make the meal more memorable for people, so they remember Avon for this event for example, instead of chicken, they could have carved herb and glazed pork tenderloin, but only if they had some extra funds leftover.

Mr. Boccabella stated if they had 200 people attend at \$40/per person that is \$8,000 total. He believes Ms. Wetzig sent out information that they have \$4,200 in sponsorships. He added so \$12,200 is what they would have approximately coming in, assuming that 200 people show up. Mr. Boccabella advised Tom's Country Place is currently \$8,800.

Ms. Berges stated Mr. Boccabella is right about the number and noted they need about 200 people which would pay for Tom's Country Place, the programs, giveaways and centerpieces and that is assuming the centerpieces are \$200 in total, but she does not know that cost yet. Ms. Berges stated that amount coming in would cover those aspects and anything extra they would need more registrants or more sponsors. Ms. Berges added if they also want the programs that Ms. Pitasky estimated the cost at \$1,500 for the program. Ms. Berges noted it would be another 52 people that would need to register to cover the program costs, 30 people that would have to register to pay for the giveaways which would be up to 200 people just to cover those costs. She wishes they could have a crystal ball and could say they are going to have 250 people then they know how much wiggle room they have. She added they may know the final numbers in time to let Tom's Country Place adjust the menu upward to what Mr. Varga suggested.

Mr. Varga added adjusting the menu was just a thought to consider as he wants Avon to stand out. Ms. Wetzig stated it would be nice if they had another \$1,000 platinum sponsor and Mr. Varga noted he is working on trying to get another platinum sponsor. Ms. Wetzig stated that Tom's Country Place also advised the Commission could bring their own dessert, but she did not think it was worth it to pursue that

option. Ms. Wetzig stated if they decide to have a cake the slicing of the cake is already included in the cost of the entrees. Mr. Varga suggested they should get a big tree-shaped cake and Ms. Wetzig and Ms. Berges liked that idea and it was noted people would remember that.

Ms. Wetzig asked how the dinner entrée was at the Urban Forestry conference and Mr. Varga stated the lunch option was chicken, vegetables and cheesy potatoes. Ms. Wetzig asked if they had dessert and Ms. Berges responded that cookies were available for dessert. Mr. Varga also suggested they could have little tree cookies as a dessert option. Ms. Wetzig stated the food selection is due April 15th to Tom's Country Place.

➤ **Programs**

Ms. Wetzig advised she has to get everything submitted to Ms. Pitasky soon. She added Ms. Pitasky has most of what she needs for the program she just needs to send her the list with PineHaven, Willoway Nurseries, and Rusty Oak. She noted that Ms. Pitasky needs all the artwork by tomorrow. Mr. Varga stated that he needs to contact Rusty Oak. Ms. Wetzig asked if they could get someone to sponsor like Willoway Nurseries and their ad would be bigger in the program.

Mr. Traxler stated he called Leshar Tree, but they were not very receptive. Mr. Varga advised Leshar Tree works directly with Duane Streater, Avon Safety/Service Director. Mr. Varga advised he is going to talk with Mr. Streater tomorrow to see if there are any further discussions with Leshar Tree.

➤ **Banners**

Ms. Wetzig stated they are going to use the banners they already have, and she plans to collect those before their next meeting.

➤ **Stage Setup**

Mr. Smith advised he spoke with Aaron Jenkins, IT- City of Avon, and he advised he would be there the night before to set-up and he also plans to be there on the day of the event as well.

➤ **Raffles**

Ms. Wetzig advised they are all set with the raffle.

➤ **Door Prizes and Giveaways**

Ms. Wetzig stated Willoway Nurseries indicated they would donate some trees, and she noted the plants will be from Lake County Nursery. Mr. Varga asked what they were going to give away and sought confirmation that it was a tote bag. Ms. Berges confirmed that to be correct and advised she sent out the list to review prior to tonight's meeting and she was going with the budget of \$6 total per person until they knew if they had more money available. Ms. Berges stated she would like to put the order in this week to make sure they get the bags in on time. She added they know the tote bags are \$2.83/each but she is unsure which of these items the Commission would prefer, and which are the top ones that they want to order. Ms. Wetzig asked Ms. Johnson if she had any other ideas and noted she had mentioned the Post-It notes previously. Ms. Johnson stated she had a couple of other ideas and thought these ideas were all good as well and while she prefers something besides the mousepad, other people may feel different. Ms. Johnson looked at the "everything tool" that has a lot of different gadgets on it, including a flashlight and it can also fit on a belt or keychain. She added the Post-It notes are only about \$.45 or \$.50 each for a small pad of paper that has about 25 pieces of paper and noted it was just an easy, inexpensive option.

Mr. Varga stated he thought the rain gauge was a great idea because if you are into horticulture a rain gauge is very important. Mr. Varga stated personally he feels a rain gauge would be very useful for everyone because he believes it is essential. Mr. Traxler asked if they would they be able to further discuss the total amount. Ms. Berges stated if they ordered the tote bags, Post It notes, and the rain gauge and it would be close to \$6.00/each. Additionally, she offered they could purchase the tote bags, pens, and the rain gauge, or even the tote bags and the “everything tool”, but if they wanted to add the pens that would put them over budget. Ms. Berges added she does not have a preference regarding what option they decide.

Mr. Smith stated he uses Post-It notes continuously for reminders so he would recommend that option. Ms. Wetzig inquired what are they going to have imprinted on the pens. Ms. Berges stated that is a question whether they put the City logo/City of Avon, Tree Commission, Tree Commission logo, etc. She asked Ms. Wetzig if she had a preference what to put on the pens. Ms. Wetzig responded she thinks Avon Tree Commission should be on there. Ms. Berges confirmed rain gauge, tote bags, and Post It notes, in addition to the pens if they can add those as well and Mr. Varga agreed.

Mr. Traxler suggested in reference to the pens to combine it with Arbor Day so it could be a gift they hand out but also remind people when Arbor Day takes place. Mr. Varga also noted they may have some items leftover and that is just something to keep in mind. Mr. Smith stated it could note Avon Arbor Day first Saturday in October and they could abbreviate Saturday. He added Arbor Day is always the first Saturday in October, so it is a permanent reminder.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Berges relayed to the Tree Commission a congratulations on behalf of City Council on obtaining the Tree City USA and Growth Awards status and added City Council was very complimentary and are very impressed with all that the Tree Commission has accomplished. She noted the presentation that she and Mr. Varga gave is now available on the City website with the power-point voice-over and with help from Johnny Gasior. She noted it replaces the one listed previously and she was thankful to Ms. Brooks for her assistance in ensuring everything was taken care of. She advised the City recently purchased the Urig property on Detroit Road which is across the street from St. Joseph Cemetery. She stated it is a brick ranch, and the City has acquired that property and will keep the house as long as possible, but at some point it will be turned into a passive park with walking paths. Ms. Berges also noted that they are looking at adding a land disturbance fee Ordinance for the April 21st Council Work Session Agenda which would require developers to pay a certain amount per acre for land they are disturbing whether there are trees located on it or not as they are still disturbing the land which would be paid into a Special Revenue Fund that would be used for planting new trees and possibly maintenance of trees such as pruning, mulching, removal of trees, etc. on City or public property.

Mr. Boccabella sought confirmation that on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, they will begin to set up for the event at Tom’s Country Place and inquired if there was a target time to meet. Mr. Smith stated set up would begin in the late afternoon. Ms. Wetzig noted possibly around 5:00 p.m. and asked if that was easier for everyone. Mr. Smith stated he asked Mr. Hricovec what would be a good time and Mr. Hricovec indicated that he would let them know as it may be later in the afternoon. Mr. Varga noted 3:00 p.m. is possible at the very earliest and Ms. Wetzig noted 3:30 may be better. Ms. Wetzig added they can re-connect on a set up time at the next meeting. Mr. Varga stated they should know at the next meeting on May 7, 2025. Mr. Smith offered to Mr. Varga that they could also stop by Tom’s Country Place and try to

arrange it with Mr. Hricovec as well. Ms. Wetzig stated Ashley Spooner, Event Coordinator, is the contact they would need to speak with as well at Tom's Country Place.

Ms. Wetzig stated the band/orchestra is not available for this event. Ms. Wetzig sought confirmation that everyone is good with the menu suggested by Ms. Englemann. There was general consensus that everyone was good with the menu selections.

Mr. Varga advised a couple members will be able to meet with Matt Leiden, Urban Forester, on April 17th or the 23rd at 10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. It was decided that April 17th at 1:00 p.m. would be the best time to meet and Ms. Wetzig and Ms. Berges plan to attend. He added for their presentation at the Urban Forestry Conference which went very well, that their student member, Olivia Pajak, was highlighted. Mr. Smith noted there were questions from those in attendance and interest in the new student member and how she was selected by the Tree Commission. Mr. Varga asked if their presentation was posted on the website and Ms. Brooks stated they could get it posted if he wishes, and he added that would be great. Ms. Brooks advised she will talk with Mr. Jenkins. Ms. Wetzig stated she needs a final list of the City employees regarding who is attending and Ms. Berges advised she has it and is just waiting on a response from two people. Mr. Varga added he will communicate with Mr. Moeglin and Mr. Leiden to touch base regarding the emails and hopefully they will get similar sponsors. He inquired if sponsors registered late would they not be in the program and Ms. Wetzig responded she would not think so. Ms. Berges stated if they need to, they could do a separate stand-alone sheet if they had to add anyone. There were no further comments.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no audience comments.

ADJOURN: 8:15 p.m.

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

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

The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Avon Tree Commission is Wednesday,
May 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council