

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, May 7, 2025

The Chairman Rick Varga, called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Others in Attendance: Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Traxler to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, April 9, 2025, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Megan Englemann, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes".

The vote was 7 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

Mr. Varga opened the meeting by saying they would be reviewing the checklist handout for hosting the Tree City USA event to be held on Thursday, May 15, 2025.

Mr. Varga stated that he was at the Willoway Nurseries distribution center, and he left flyers for the event available as he observed businesspeople passing through the facility. He believes handing out the extra flyers worked out great as they believe this is how they got Rooted Landscape Design as a platinum sponsor. He noted that Ms. Englemann sent him the menu recommendations and he relayed that information to Tom's Country Place.

Ms. Wetzig asked if he submitted the cake information and Mr. Varga advised no and he noted the Commission needs to discuss the cake and if they are going to do a logo on the cake.

There was a brief discussion regarding the cake design and options as to how to have the cake designed.

Mr. Varga wondered if Costco could apply a design to a cake.

Ms. Wetzig stated she does not believe Costco is able to apply a picture to a cake.

Mr. Varga stated they need to order a couple sheet cakes. He added Tom's Country Place advised they can have the cakes ready on Wednesday prior to the event on Thursday.

Ms. Wetzig stated the slicing and serving is included with the food cost. Ms. Wetzig asked Ms. Berges if the City would purchase the cake or would someone get reimbursed.

Ms. Berges advised she believes the City has a Costco account. She added Ms. Wetzig could let her know the cake order.

Mr. Varga asked the Commission who could handle the cake.

Ms. Wetzig responded that she and Ms. Berges would handle the ordering of the cakes.

Mr. Varga stated he would be at Tom's Country Place on Wednesday before the event to set up. Mr. Varga asked if they have a count for how many people will be attending.

Ms. Wetzig responded 192 people, vendors included. She asked if the vendors are sitting at the vendor tables or would they sit at another table in the main seating area. Ms. Wetzig felt unsure if they would join the main seating area.

Mr. Varga advised that usually the vendors do not join the main seating area, and they typically stay at their vendor table. He stated the Commission can go at any time on Wednesday to start setting up at Tom's Country Place. Mr. Varga advised Tom's Country Place will be setting up all the tables as well as the stage on Tuesday. He noted if they want to rearrange a couple tables, etc., they can do that while there on Wednesday.

Ms. Berges sought confirmation that they will have to leave Tom's Country Place by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday and Mr. Varga responded that is correct.

Mr. Varga advised that Aaron Jenkins, IT – City of Avon, indicated that he will be at Tom's Country Place around 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 14th to assist in any technical setup.

Ms. Berges asked if they will be assembling the tote bags and the giveaways and noted if they have any volunteers to help with that task it would be appreciated.

Ms. Wetzig added they also will be including the flyers/programs.

Mr. Varga asked if everyone from the Tree Commission will be attending the event on Thursday. There was a consensus that everyone on the Tree Commission will be attending the Tree City USA event.

Ms. Pajak inquired what time this event would be taking place and Mr. Varga responded it starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m., and noted that she could attend for breakfast or lunch if she is not able to stay for both. Ms. Pajak stated she is unsure if she would be able to leave school for this event. Mr. Varga understood and said he just wanted to make sure she knew she would be welcome to attend.

Ms. Englemann asked what time they would be arriving for setup on Wednesday.

Mr. Varga advised that he planned to arrive early with Mr. Smith and stated they would go there right after lunchtime.

Ms. Wetzig stated she would get there around 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

Ms. Englemann asked what time she should arrive to assist in setting up and inquired around lunchtime or noon time-frame on Wednesday and Mr. Varga confirmed.

Mr. Varga noted Mr. Traxler will arrive at noon on Wednesday.

Mr. Boccabella confirmed he would be able to arrive at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday to help set up.

Mr. Varga stated as they review the number of tables in the lobby, they will know more about that setup on Wednesday. He noted they can rearrange some tables if needed and Ashley Spooner, Event Coordinator at Tom's Country Place, indicated that she will have some people there on Wednesday if they have any questions and if they need to bring in more tables or set more things up. Mr. Varga added they will probably have some extra tables as well just in case.

Ms. Wetzig stated if you subtract the vendors, she has 194, but she will have that final count tomorrow.

Mr. Varga stated let Ms. Spooner know that it would be at least 200 people attending, and the facility would most likely be set up for around 210 to 215 people.

There was general discussion regarding the name tags for the attendees and the task of printing the name tags as well as how they will present the name tags for the attendees.

Mr. Varga advised he confirmed the event speakers.

Ms. Wetzig noted there are 11 tables for the vendors. Mr. Varga added that when they arrive on Wednesday, they can discuss the tables further.

Mr. Varga asked about the status of the centerpieces and Ms. Wetzig stated she has 22 wood bases for the centerpieces. Ms. Englemann added the plants will be of different variations and sizes including some taller plants. Ms. Berges inquired about the cost of the centerpieces and Ms. Englemann advised she does not have it with her at the moment, but she will email Ms. Berges with that information. Mr. Varga thanked Ms. Englemann and stated the centerpieces look fabulous.

Mr. Varga stated they have the programs and other items available for pickup including giveaways, tote bags, pens, notepads, rain gauges etc. Ms. Berges inquired about the banners and Ms. Markovitz advised the banners can be picked up at City Hall. Mr. Varga advised they can pick up all the items on Wednesday. Ms. Wetzig asked if it was just him that would be picking the items up. Mr. Varga responded that he, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Traxler would also be helping to pick everything up. Mr. Traxler added he will be picking up the tree ring.

Mr. Varga inquired about the status of the raffle and asked if they have the tickets. Ms. Wetzig held up a sample of the raffle ticket and said she will have them ready. Mr. Smith noted that it says, "selling and collecting money," and Ms. Wetzig stated it is free, and that they are not doing that. She added you would just provide your name, email address, and phone number, then put it in the box. Ms. Wetzig asked if anyone had a box for the collection of raffle tickets and noted she could create one if needed. Mr. Smith stated Mr. Boccabella has a raffle drum that was used on Arbor Day last year. Mr. Boccabella confirmed and stated he could bring a raffle drum.

Ms. Berges asked why they are printing the raffle tickets and going through that extra work when they can just use the tearaway raffle tickets, because she thought they were having the raffle setup where you must be present to win. She inquired if their email address or phone number are needed or are they using that information for another reason. Ms. Wetzig responded she does not know, but that is what Rocky River has done previously, and she does not like the little red premade tickets.

Ms. Berges added she is just trying to reduce the work, and Ms. Wetzig noted she understood. Ms. Berges offered they can bring the extra roll of tickets just in case and Mr. Smith noted that he has the roll of raffle tickets. Mr. Varga agreed the roll of raffle tickets would be helpful as a backup. Ms. Wetzig stated she prefers to make the raffle tickets, and it is not going to cost anything, so she is going to do the raffle tickets. Mr. Varga stated it would be good to have a backup just in case.

Mr. Smith inquired about having the raffle by the registration table. Ms. Wetzig stated she thought they were going to have a separate table somewhere possibly by the tree ring yet noted they would have to figure out how to set that up. She added they would have a pen, tickets and the raffle bin so you sign your name and drop the ticket in the bin. Mr. Smith confirmed that they would collect and draw the raffle tickets. Ms. Wetzig stated they do not know how many door prizes they are going to have till that day. Mr. Smith stated that he and Mr. Traxler will run the raffle.

Mr. Varga also advised they will be sure to determine where to display the banners.

Mr. Traxler asked where they would be holding the prizes and how they would transport the prizes. Ms. Wetzig added the vendors are bringing their donated prizes to the event. Mr. Varga added once the awards ceremony is finished then they can have a group of people that are available to bring some of the prizes to the front. Mr. Varga noted Willoway Nurseries is going to be bringing some hanging baskets. Mr. Traxler noted they would have to be efficient due to the limited time. It was noted that you must be present to win.

Mr. Varga stated with the centerpieces some cities put a tag underneath the chair and those with a tag under their chair get the centerpiece. He asked the Commission their thoughts on that idea to save some time during the raffle. Ms. Wetzig added she thought that was a good idea.

Mr. Smith asked with raffling off trees, will they have those already set up in front of the room so if the vendors came to the event they would put them in a specific spot. Ms. Wetzig added they do have some larger trees outside as well. Mr. Varga stated they can figure that out and have it setup in a way where they are "raffling off a tree in the back by Willoway Nurseries," for example.

Mr. Varga stated they will have media coverage for the event as he spoke with The Chronicle, and Ms. Seighman, and also noted that Ms. Berges reached out as well. He presently feels there will be good media coverage at the event. He noted that Bob Tuneburg, a Westlife photographer, will be coming to take photos in the morning, probably between 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Mr. Varga advised for the tech setup Mr. Jenkins indicated he would be there around 3:00 p.m. if not sooner on Wednesday. Mr. Varga added Mr. Jenkins will be helping to set up their screens and display their PowerPoint presentations in the front area where the vendors will be located. Mr. Varga added the PowerPoint presentations will be running continuously displaying of their accomplishments and their Student Member.

There was a brief discussion regarding door prizes between Ms. Wetzig and Ms. Englemann in which they would look into certificates further.

Mr. Varga stated they will meet on Wednesday, May, 14th at noon at Tom's Country Place, to begin setting up as they have until 5:00 p.m. He stated Matt Leiden, Urban Forester, will also be in attendance for setup on Wednesday and Ms. Wetzig added Mr. Leiden will be bringing the awards. Mr. Varga advised he will talk to Tom's Country Place as from what he gathered from discussions with Ms. Spooner there were not any restrictions on who is able to set up on Wednesday, but advised he would re-confirm that information.

Mr. Varga emphasized the main item that needs to be addressed is the cake. Ms. Wetzig asked if a place like Michael's has anything that can be used to copy a design to a cake. Ms. Johnson stated if Costco cannot do a design, Giant Eagle could, and Mr. Varga believed that to be correct. Ms. Wetzig suggested they get one main cake from Giant Eagle and then get a cake from Costco like vanilla and chocolate. Mr. Varga thought having both flavors would be great to have. Ms. Wetzig asked if the City has a Giant Eagle account. Ms. Berges responded no, and they would need a purchase order for that. Mr. Varga stated they can contact Costco first and see what they are able to do.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Smith inquired of the time that he and Mr. Varga will be there Thursday morning, the day of the event, and asked if it was at 6:45 a.m. and Mr. Varga confirmed. Mr. Smith noted that the vendors are going to start arriving at 7:00 a.m.

Mr. Varga stated that the tradition for the Arborist is to meet socially after the event and asked if anyone would like to attend and he could make a map if needed. There was some brief discussion regarding meeting socially after the event.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There were no audience comments.

ADJOURN: 6:27 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. Boccabella, "yes"; Megan Englemann, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes".

The vote was 7 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, June 11, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council