

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

The Chairman Rick Varga, called the meeting to order at 7:36 P.M.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Megan Engelmann; Mary Johnson; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Chair Richard Varga (non-voting Member)

Absent: Liesa Wetzig

Others in Attendance: Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024

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

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

AVON HOSTING THE TREE CITY USA IN 2025

Mr. Smith advised that the deposit has been placed for the Tree City USA event Avon is hosting in 2025. He inquired if additional workgroups will be set-up for that. Mr. Varga advised Urban Forester, Mr. Leiden, gave him a format of what they would be expected to do. Mr. Leiden indicated him that they are well ahead of schedule. Mr. Smith agreed and noted it was simply a binder with a timeframe for where we should be at, and they are doing very well. Mr. Varga stated he wishes to keep things moving forward because the main task right now was to secure a place and they secured Tom's Country Place for this event. He added they still have a lot of work to do, and he wanted to let everyone know where they stand thus far for the Tree City USA Award event.

Mr. Smith inquired of Mr. Varga about some of the speakers who are planning to attend the event. Mr. Varga responded thus far, he has confirmed Jim Chatfield, an Instructor/Professor of Plant Pathology at the Ohio State University, is going to be there. Mr. Varga stated that not only is Mr. Chatfield a great speaker he is also is extremely knowledgeable. Mr. Varga stated they would like to get Joe Boggs, an Entomologist from the Ohio State University. Mr. Varga noted Mr. Boggs would be traveling from Cincinnati, and he may be a speaker also. Mr. Varga further advised they are still looking for one more speaker, but they anticipate being able to find someone. He stated he was considering arranging to have someone from Willoway Nurseries as another speaker since they are a local business that could work out great. In addition, Mr. Varga added there are going to be a lot of Arborists at this event and they are always looking for more information on new tree varieties, and cultivars thus Willoway Nurseries would be an excellent fit. Mr. Smith noted that Willoway Nurseries is a great resource here in Avon and he believes that is something

they should pursue. Mr. Varga agreed and mentioned they can discuss communicating with Willoway Nurseries.

DISCUSSION FOR ARBOR DAY

Mr. Varga stated he handed out to everyone an Arbor Day Celebration event sheet for their review. He advised he tried to detail the activities, but requested that everyone look at the sheet and let him know if there is an area that they want to participate in activity-wise. He added at the welcome table, they want to put together some type of giveaway. Mr. Varga advised he can contact the International Society of Arboriculture as they have informational handouts that he can procure and inquired if any member has interest to be the lead member on that to let him know.

Mr. Smith stated last year they had giveaway bags to put items in which had the year written on the them. He wanted to suggest to not put a year on the bags so when there are extras, they can be reused the following year. Mr. Varga stated that is a great idea and also referenced that if banners have the years listed like Tree City 2023, then they must get Tree City 2024, etc. hence they can reference the event and not the date. Mr. Smith advised that there were a lot of bags left over from last year. Mr. Varga requested for everyone to review the list that he distributed and to advise who was interested in what activity. Mr. Varga inquired of Mr. Traxler if he was involved in the scavenger hunt last year with Ms. Wetzig regarding the tree planting. Mr. Traxler stated it was the tree planting and tree samples giveaway and he indicated that he could probably handle that activity. Mr. Varga asked who would be interested in handling the food truck as they were considering Swenson's.

Mr. Varga stated Mr. Smith is responsible for the beer table fundraiser as well as the petting zoo and that is all set. Mr. Varga added they have the tree planning pretty much situated. He also noted last year Mr. Smith and him collected donations and he already contacted Cork & Barrel, Heinen's, Ray's Auto and Truck Service, SiteOne and X-Golf. He added if anyone has any contacts they wish to reach out to such as McAllister's Deli or City BBQ etc. who they may believe would be interested in donating to Arbor Day to let him know. He added they are always looking for participants such as someone from the library, the Avon Garden Club, Lorain Community Metroparks, Lorain County Water and Conservation Group etc. Ms. Englemann inquired if these are related to the booths that will be setup in the Storybook Trail. Mr. Varga confirmed and added if the Girl Scouts want to set something up to participate they would welcome them to participate as well. Ms. Englemann stated she reached out to a Rust Belt Riders if they are interested in having a booth and contacted the high school and is waiting to hear back from a School Advisor. She believes she will have a response before school begins.

Mr. Varga stated he would like for everyone to think about all these items that are on his handout. He will contact some lead people to see if they can start getting together and start discussing this more thoroughly. Ms. Johnson asked what kind of sponsors and donations they are looking for such as cash donations or donations of gift cards to restaurants in great numbers or as giveaways such as raffles. Mr. Varga advised that Bob-O-Link Golf Course donated a gift certificate, as well as Cork & Barrel, Heinen's, Inferno Pizza, Ray's Auto & Truck Service, etc. Ms. Englemann inquired if they need a person to be charge of the booth vendors or will that go under "site setup" by the Storybook Trail area. Mr. Varga advised it would go under "site setup." Mr. Varga noted that of the few people he has talked to like Cork & Barrel, have their own tent; however, Cork & Barrel did not bring their tent last year. He added they have some room in their tents to help cover a few people, but not everyone can fit in one tent. Mr. Varga said Mr. Smith had the idea of going down the Storybook Trail because he was at an event where that was

happening and he liked it. Mr. Smith confirmed and stated that he and Ms. Berges were at the “Not So Spooky Halloween” Event and that is the area where all the vendors were set up.

Mr. Smith advised he called and had left a message for Donna Kelly-Sprinkle, the Branch Manager of the Avon Library, as a reminder that they need a tree story for the Storybook Trail. Mr. Smith noted that Ms. Kelly-Sprinkle is out of the office until approximately September 15, 2024. He added when they get the flyers from Ms. Englemann, he will stop at the Avon Library to drop some off to Ms. Kelly-Sprinkle to hang and he will remind her at that time. Mr. Smith added he would recommend to keep all the vendors on the Storybook Trail. He also noted that for the tent space that could be for the Garden Club etc. Mr. Varga added he would also like to set up a small area for the “Ask the Arborist” section.

Mr. Varga stated regarding the tree giveaway, this year they do not want to give away sapplings, they want to give away larger trees. He added that people tend to be excited about the trees and the trees being free, but they are tiny little trees, and people tend to forget to plant and water them and within a month the majority do not make it. Mr. Varga stated Fairview Park had an idea where they wanted to give away larger trees like a six-foot tree in a 5–7-gallon container, but they wanted to make it where you have to sign up for it and take a short class for the trees care including how to plant and care for it. He added they wanted to get people more involved instead of just grabbing a tree but not doing anything with it as it is more of an expense for them. Mr. Smith stated Ms. Wetzig brought up the thought of having a class at Arbor Day or at least possibly one or two sessions, but he is unsure how long the class would be to indicate the exact number of sessions. Mr. Smith commented it could be possible that after completing the session the person would get a certificate signed by Mr. Varga so they can hand that in to get their tree. Mr. Varga stated he likes that idea, but the only thing is that there is going to be so much going on that day. He added he was not sure if that would make people think a little bit more if they show up the following week. Mr. Smith added then they would know they are serious.

Mr. Varga advised that procuring these larger trees are going to be a little bit more costly but the survival rate, he is hopeful, would go up as a consequence. Mr. Varga stated as Mr. Traxler knows if it is a larger tree it is going to have a more established root zone so it should have better luck as long as they advise people on how to water it. Mr. Varga asked if Mr. Traxler could come up with his 5-gallon bucket that he always uses for watering. Mr. Traxler confirmed that in reference to the last month’s discussion, it makes sense not to make it too easy and they can discuss that further. Mr. Varga inquired of Mr. Traxler if he wants to look into Willoway Nurseries to see what is available. Mr. Traxler requested a copy of the availability list for Willoway Nurseries and Mr. Varga advised he can send the link via email. Mr. Varga advised they have everything and if Mr. Traxler could pick 2-3 varieties of what is that it would be great. Mr. Traxler noted as long as the availability does not change.

Mr. Varga advised with this time of the year he is not very worried about the availability changing, although if this was April it might be a different story because then they would be selling to garden centers. Mr. Varga added they might run out of a specific item; however, they can pick out 3 items out of 500-600 available of each item. He added if they could select the Cercis Canadensis, the Hearts of Gold Redbud, as one of them since it is our City tree. Mr. Varga advised that Willoway Nurseries sends him an updated list about every two weeks so he can send the link as requested.

Ms. Berges asked Mr. Varga if there would be a drawing of the trees for people who want a tree and who plan on planting it. She also inquired if they would fill out a slip. Mr. Varga responded that is a great question and he would like to open that for discussion and then he can render an opinion of the optimal

way to go. Mr. Smith stated Ms. Wetzig was wanting something on the day of Arbor Day but he knows what he is saying with all the things that will be going on at the event, so they were thinking of maybe the weekend after in the park area where they would do the planting demonstration and the tree giveaway. Mr. Traxler stated he thinks that is very adaptable and it should not take more than 20 minutes for the presentation. Mr. Varga added that way they just do it once and like Mr. Traxler said they will have samples of the trees there to show people. Mr. Varga noted so that way they do not have to bring all the trees there and they can just bring one sample of three different species, native species would be nice. Mr. Varga advised he will send the list to Mr. Traxler so he can look it over and determine what is available.

Mr. Traxler stated that Ms. Berges was mentioning the number of the seedlings they are planting, and he believed it to be about under 100 seedlings which probably costs approximately \$140. Mr. Varga advised they would be about \$28 apiece from what he saw. Mr. Traxler responded do they want to limit the number of trees and noted potentially 30 trees. Mr. Varga advised it would be for the first 30 people that sign up for it. Mr. Smith commented in addition, the first 30 people that show up to obtain the instructions. Mr. Varga stated that is very true as they may not even show up for the instructions. Mr. Smith stated the first 30 people that show up get the trees.

Ms. Englemann stated that initially she was thinking they would be doing registration at the Arbor Day event and then they would come back, although she thinks they would still end up with a lot of trees that would not be taken if people did not show. She inquired if they have it set up so that the first 30 people that show up get it for free, would they be able to have people purchase a tree for \$28 if they go over 30 people. Mr. Varga noted that is a very good question. Ms. Englemann stated that way if they have more people that show up to the event maybe a person who was on the free list does not come, they will pass that on to another person that was going to purchase a tree. Mr. Varga advised he liked that idea, and it is something they should think about. There was a consensus and agreement that they liked the idea Ms. Englemann presented.

Ms. Berges inquired how much the trees would cost? Mr. Varga stated it depends, but approximately \$25 to \$30 for one tree; however, it would be a manageable tree, not huge, but probably about 5-6 feet tall. Mr. Traxler stated it is going to depend on the type of tree as the Hearts of Gold Redbud is not going to be \$28 unfortunately. Mr. Varga agreed and advised Mr. Traxler can look at the list in further detail as he had only just skimmed it quickly to see what was available. Mr. Varga advised to Mr. Traxler they had the Flamethrower, it is a new Cercis Canadensis, which is somewhat close to the Hearts of Gold Redbud and that is available. Mr. Varga advised Mr. Traxler can talk to Willoway Nurseries.

Mr. Varga noted that Willoway Nurseries has been around for about 50 years and there is always that gray area as far as availability. He added they can look into that, and Mr. Traxler can look into availability and the prices then they can figure something out from there.

Mr. Varga noted to conclude the Arbor Day discussion, he asked everyone to start picking out their activities and see what they want to do to help out in certain areas and they can email him an update and he will communicate that with everyone. He added that he believes they have a great start because Mr. Boccabella already presented the setups which they have and will present to the City as far as Taylor Rental so that can proceed forward.

Mr. Boccabella advised he will go over the invoice for the group and it includes all the rental items they had last year. He added a few months ago it was initially agreed upon to repeat everything for this year

which would include: 18 tables, 120 chairs, beverage dispensers, coolers, a portable beverage bar, 3 large tents (20' x 30' foot frame tents), one tent for music and entertainment and the other two tents for vendors and their own use, tent sidewalls, raffle drum, sound system, stage (1 piece for entertainment then the stage outside the tent for the High School band and speakers. Mr. Varga inquired if anyone had any other additional items that may be needed. He added he thought this worked out well last year. Mr. Smith agreed and felt they had covered all the bases. Mr. Boccabella further advised that the total cost of the rental items were \$3,317.70. He added he thought that last year they had some extra chairs and tables floating around and they are inexpensive, and you just have no idea on how many you will actually need whether 50 chairs or 150 chairs. Mr. Varga noted it is better to have more than less.

Ms. Johnson inquired about trash and garbage cans and if we are using what is already there. Mr. Smith stated that the City provides these big cardboard trash receptacles and there will be some City workers there that will set those up and dispose of them. Mr. Smith also stated that he will speak with Ms. Morahan at the Streets Department, to which Mr. Varga and him have done the past two years, and to talk to them about a month in advance.

Ms. Berges stated last year they put the chairs in front of the stage and she believed a lot of people appreciated that they could sit down during the choir and speeches even though they were not very long. She knows they discussed the sound system after the fact that it did not carry as much as they would have liked so she believes that is the only thing they would need to look into further. Mr. Boccabella advised for this event there will be a different sound system which will be a corded system vs. the battery operated one which did not have enough power. He added this sound system will be plugged in and from his initial testing it looks like it will be much better.

Mr. Varga mentioned if the Girl Scouts want to participate in the Opening Ceremony, they would love to have them, or if any other groups are interested. Mr. Varga added that hopefully they have the high school choir. Mr. Smith advised he contacted the Choir Teacher, Michael Moyseenko, to extend an invitation and he has a prior commitment that day so he will speak with the school administration to see if they can get someone else to chaperone the kids and he is awaiting his response. Mr. Smith added the kids were excellent last year in their choir performances.

Mr. Varga advised he is open to any other ideas for the opening ceremony. Mr. Smith mentioned having the Avon High School Choir is a way to get kids more involved like Ms. Englemann with the Girl Scouts who are of different age groups. Mr. Smith added if anyone can think of any other kids that may be interested in being a part, they are welcome to contact Mr. Varga. Mr. Varga advised felt they need to start getting a few groups together and start working on the list.

DISCUSSION OF THE TREE COMMISSION LOGO

Ms. Englemann advised that she sent out three different ideas that she believes Ms. Berges had circulated to the group and the general consensus was that everyone likes the logo with the multiple leaves. She added some final touches to it and the one that everyone is seeing, is the logo. She noted she also worked up a draft for signage such as post cards or print materials for the Arbor Day Celebration event.

Mr. Varga advised the only other thing they have to do is the flyer for Arbor Day. Ms. Englemann advised the sign for the banner that was going to go to Mr. Boccabella and possibly for a sign for the post cards or flyers; however, they could add additional information on it. She noted they do not want all those words

on the banner, but on a post card or flyer that would be perfect. Mr. Varga stated that the other thing they have to do is to start making sure the flyer is ready for Arbor Day and he inquired of Ms. Englemann if she is working on the flyer. Ms. Englemann confirmed that she is. Ms. Englemann also noted she was going to volunteer to do the advertising for the event as she believes they relate to each other. She added she will email Mr. Varga this week and they can discuss the timeline further and they can also discuss the social media aspect as well.

A motion was made by Ms. Berges and seconded by Mr. Smith to accept the logo presented by Ms. Englemann to be the new Tree Commission Logo (*attached to minutes*), and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Englemann, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Ms. Berges, "yes".

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

WILLOWAY NURSERIES PLANT SALE

Mr. Varga advised Willoway Nurseries will be having a plant sale on Saturday, September 14, 2024, and he inquired if the Tree Commission would like to have a table there. Mr. Varga stated he told Willoway Nurseries that was great and he let them know yes so he wanted the Commission members to think about it and see if they have any availability to work that day. Mr. Varga advised that he and Mr. Smith were there last year. Mr. Smith also noted that Ms. Wetzig and Ms. Laurenzi were also present.

Mr. Smith asked if it starts at 9:00 a.m. and Mr. Varga confirmed that is correct. Mr. Smith noted it is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Mr. Varga mentioned that for their group purposes they would be there from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. which should be enough. Mr. Varga indicated that the main flow of traffic is going to be in the morning hours then after 1:00 p.m. the event traffic thins out. Mr. Varga added that this sale at Willoway Nurseries is the only time that they sell to the public.

Ms. Johnson inquired what they will have on the table at the Willoway Nurseries Plant Sale. Mr. Varga responded that usually they have information about trees in general and the main thing they try to promote is the Arbor Day event. Mr. Smith advised they will have a stack of flyers to be provided by Ms. Englemann. Mr. Smith asked Ms. Englemann if she could have a placard available so they can have a flyer standing upright with a note saying, "take a photo of this," with an arrow pointing at it. Mr. Smith added that last year he was handing a lot of flyers out and sometimes they do not want to carry the flyer and just preferred to take a photo of it.

Mr. Smith also noted that Mr. Varga had pamphlets as well and inquired where he had gotten those from. Mr. Varga advised those pamphlets and the information that he had were from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and he can secure plenty of those. Mr. Smith remarked that people took a lot of that information. Mr. Varga noted that a lot of it was informational such as how to plant trees, pruning and other general tree information. Mr. Smith mentioned to Ms. Englemann and Ms. Berges that Willoway Nurseries provides proceeds to the Avon Schools, and it is essentially a fundraiser for the schools. Mr. Smith added last year was the first time that was done. He commented that last year they had kids from choir singing, a band playing, fairies that went around for the little kids, and a bouncy house. Mr. Smith stated it was a really nice activity and there was food available such as hot dogs.

MEMBER COMMENTS –

Ms. Berges advised that Linda Heiden, is an Avon resident, and over the last two to three years she has shared articles about trees when she comes across something that may be of interest. She stated last year there was the chart on how to measure the trees, and a tree's age and Ms. Wetzig had laminated the chart. Ms. Berges noted recently Ms. Heiden recommended a book to her and she wanted to share it with the members of the Tree Commission as well as the audience, and it is titled, "The Tree Collectors," by Amy Stewart. Ms. Berges advised it will be available at the library once she returns it. She added it has short stories in which every story is about two to three pages, and it discusses different people which encompasses collectors of trees, and some people who fell into loving trees later in life. She stated overall it is very broad and easy for someone who is not an Arborist to read it and enjoy it. Ms. Berges stated she wanted to provide that recommendation and pass it along to the Commission. Mr. Varga commented it is a great book.

Ms. Johnson stated that she is happy to be here, and she is looking forward to working with all of them.

Mr. Smith advised that the Historical Tree Ring project is just about coming to fruition at this point. He added that he and Mr. Varga took the tree rings with the metal date tags for Avon to Ron Buchanan, who is the person making this project and they would have the tree rings ready any day now. Mr. Smith added he knows they want to put one of the tree rings in the lobby at City Hall and the other one at the Cahoon House. He added the one in the lobby at City Hall can be signed out by schools, scout troops, groups or those that wish to use it as an educational tool.

Mr. Varga noted they would need to take a photo for the newsletter. He also advised that the other thing he put in the newsletter was an "Ask the Arborist" section, and it is going to be about tree lawn trees. He added that since Avon is an unusual community in how the residents own the trees on their tree lawn, whereas in most other cities, the City owns the tree. He added he wanted to make everyone aware of that.

Mr. Varga further advised upon conducting research in Avon's tree ordinances, they had a sheet of recommended trees and prohibited trees, but that has proved difficult to find because it was stuck in the Ordinance. He added if you did not go through the website to pull up the Ordinance and go through the Ordinance, you would never find the trees that the Commission recommended or prohibited. Mr. Varga advised in working with Aaron Jenkins in the City's IT department, they created a link just for the recommended and prohibited trees. He stated that you can go on the City website and click on that now to easily access recommended and prohibited trees so you do not have to search for it. Mr. Varga asked Ms. Berges if they needed a photo of the Tree Commission for the newsletter and Ms. Berges confirmed.

Mr. Varga expressed a special thanks to Ms. Johnson as they are glad she is here, and they are happy to see her.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS –

Nicholas Patrick Duvall, 36400 Kinzel Road, stated he is going into the tenth grade, and he is very excited about the Tree Commission and that Avon has a Tree Commission that he could be a part of. Mr. Duvall stated he is excited for the possibility of working with the Tree Commission members as it sounds really fun.

Mr. Traxler thanked Mr. Duvall for applying for the high school student Commission member opening. Ms. Englemann thanked Mr. Duvall as well for coming and inquired if he has any experience working with trees or if it is a special interest of his. Mr. Duvall advised it is an interest that he has and he wishes to learn more.

Ms. Englemann stated she is glad that Mr. Duvall applied and for coming to the Tree Commission meeting. Mr. Varga added Mr. Duvall can see how the meetings work and how to get involved as potentially Mr. Duvall could be chosen as a student member of the Tree Commission. Mr. Varga stated the only issue is that Mr. Duvall is not 16 years old yet.

Mr. Varga inquired if there were any other applications for the position and the Clerk advised there is one other application. It was noted that previously the deadline for applications was set for September 4, 2024. Ms. Englemann noted with school starting next week they could possibly get more high school student applications for the Tree Commission. She added she is very happy to see Mr. Duvall's enthusiasm and she is very glad that he came to the meeting today.

ADJOURN: 8:18 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: Ms. Englemann, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "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, September 11, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

Avon Tree Commission

