

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, September 10, 2025
At 7:30 p.m.**

The Chairman Mr. Varga, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: 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: Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

Absent - Mary Berges; John Gasior, Law Director

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 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, August 13, 2025, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, “yes”; Ms. Englemann, “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.

DISCUSSION OF THE 2025 ARBOR DAY EVENT, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025 Mr. Varga
Mr. Varga led a comprehensive discussion about the upcoming Arbor Day event scheduled for Saturday, October 4, 2025. He covered the following elements of the event:

Opening Ceremony

Mr. Varga stated he would serve as the emcee for the opening ceremony and would introduce the Mayor and State Representative Gayle Manning, as well as any students in attendance. There was a discussion about potentially having the Avon High School's jazz band perform during the event, although this was not yet confirmed due to a possible scheduling conflict with homecoming.

Mr. Smith elaborated on his communications regarding potential student performances. He mentioned that he had spoken with Michael Moyseenko, the choir director, who confirmed that due to homecoming being a conflict for the students, perhaps one student might be able to attend, although it was not yet confirmed. Similarly, he was in contact with Eric Coleman, the jazz band director, who recently reached out and suggested that a few students might attend, but this was still in the realm of possibility and nothing was definitive. In the event that student performers are unavailable, Mr. Smith suggested the possibility of having Curt Vigg perform as a backup plan.

Welcome Table and Giveaways

Mr. Varga confirmed that the welcome table would feature various giveaway items, including bags, rain gauges, and tree planting information. He noted that they still had many items stored at City Hall from the Tree City USA event. Mr. Varga elaborated that a plethora of pamphlets would be available, along with detailed tree planting specification materials related to the City's tree plans. Additionally, he invited suggestions for any further giveaway ideas since they wanted to ensure they have plenty of items for the bags prepared for the event.

Promotional Materials and Community Support

Flyers for the event were available at the meeting for Commission Members to distribute. Mr. Varga reported that several local businesses had been contacted and would be providing gift cards, including Bob-O-Link, Ray's Auto, Pickering, Site One, Taylor Rental, X Golf, and Big Top Brewhouse. He invited Commission Members to take flyers to distribute and encouraged them to reach out to additional businesses if anyone was willing to procure more gift cards. Mr. Varga emphasized the importance of community support for the event and the contributions of these businesses in enhancing the overall experience for attendees.

Yard Signs

Mr. Smith reported that he and Mr. Boccabella had prepared 30 yard signs. He planned to place them at schools, parks, City Hall, the old village school, and the library. Eleven signs were available for Commission Members to take and display.

Site Logistics

Discussion included confirmation that the Service Department would provide trash receptacles, block roads, and ensure access to restrooms. Mr. Boccabella raised concerns about ensuring the grass would be cut before the event, noting issues from the previous year. Michelle Morahan, from the City Service Department Administration, was identified as the contact person for this task and would be responsible for making sure the grass was appropriately maintained. Furthermore, Ms. Wetzig inquired about the availability of recycling receptacles, to which Mr. Smith replied that although they are not usually present, arrangements were made with Ms. Morahan to have them available.

The setup of tents was scheduled for Thursday, October 2nd, with Mr. Boccabella confirming that both he and Mr. Smith coordinated the placement of 30 signs around critical locations, including schools, parks, and City Hall. Any Commission member interested was invited to take the extra signs available that evening to display in other strategic spots within the community.

There was an in-depth discussion about relocating the petting zoo next to the playground to provide a safer environment for both children participating and zoo staff. It was decided that this location was ideal as it allowed the petting zoo to be adjacent to where children would be playing, making it more convenient for families.

Mr. Varga requested that Commission Members meet at the Aquatic Center on Friday at 3:00 PM to review placement of tables and make assignments. The aim was to have everything set and organized by Friday to avoid any confusion on the day of the event. This session was also intended to ensure all members were informed of their responsibilities and any last-minute changes to the plan. Volunteers from the Avon Garden Club were expected to assist with the scavenger hunt and other tasks, providing additional hands to support the smooth execution of the event.

Additional Activities and Attractions

The event would feature a diverse array of activities and attractions to engage attendees. Highlights include:

- **A tree-themed scavenger hunt** managed by the Avon Garden Club, which would provide an interactive and educational experience focused on trees and nature.
- **A "Who Lives in Trees" presentation**, although the logistics for this segment were still being developed due to Ms. Berges being primarily involved with the coordination alongside the Metro Parks communication team.
- **An 811 demonstration vehicle** to educate attendees about the importance of calling before digging, particularly relevant to those interested in tree planting and landscaping, emphasizing the safety measures necessary when engaging in such activities.
- **Food from Big Top Brewhouse** with arrangements confirmed for attendees to enjoy meals during the event.

- **Beverages available** would include water, and there was a discussion about potentially offering apple cider as well. The final decisions regarding these beverages were still being finalized.
- **Beer provided by the Lions Club** priced at \$5 per beer, offering selections like Yuengling, Modelo Especial, and Great Lakes Oktoberfest, ensuring a variety of beer options for attendees to enjoy.
- **Live music entertainment featuring Curt Vigg** performing Neil Young songs, which would provide a musical backdrop and enhance the celebratory atmosphere of the Arbor Day event.
- **Temporary tattoos/decals for children**, supervised by Ms. Englemann, adding a fun and engaging activity specifically targeted at younger attendees. These items would likely be placed near the scavenger hunt and "Who Lives in Trees" presentation area to create a children's section.

These activities and attractions collectively aim to foster community involvement, educate participants about environmental and safety practices, and create an enjoyable family-friendly event.

Tree Giveaway

The Commission confirmed plans for giving away 30 trees to families. Recipients would receive information cards detailing the type of tree they selected and be invited to a tree planting training session on Saturday, October 11th at 11:00 AM at Eagle Point Park. During the meeting, it was noted that the trees available for giveaway this year would include three types: a red oak, a hybrid maple, and an additional oak species, although the specific type of oak was not detailed in the transcript. The giveaway logistics were discussed, with assurance that there would be ample materials, including tree descriptions and growth information, provided to ensure participants are well-informed regarding the trees they chose to take home. Additionally, it was confirmed that the areas for tree planting at Eagle Point Park had already been marked and coordinated with Willoway Nurseries, ensuring a smooth process for the upcoming training and planting session.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED DRAWINGS OF THE TRAXLER ARBORETUM Mr. Burik Mr. Paul Burik, 37245 Carleen Avenue, presented detailed architectural drawings for the proposed Traxler Arboretum. As a retired architect and Avon resident, he volunteered his services to develop the concept. Mr. Burik's presentation included:

Site Analysis and Building Location

He explained that after multiple site visits, he identified an optimal location for the Arboretum that offers excellent views and takes full advantage of the natural features present on the site. This location is strategically chosen where the Traxler Memorial Bench currently sits, allowing for unobstructed views towards the creek, enhancing the connection to the natural surroundings. Mr. Burik noted that this location offers an interesting vantage point that aligns with the design philosophy of celebrating trees and nature. By situating the building at this point, visitors would be able to experience a harmonious blend of architecture and environment, making the most of the unique aspects of the landscape, and contributing to a serene atmosphere for relaxation and reflection.

Building Design Features

The design included several notable features that have been meticulously planned to blend with the natural surroundings while providing functional space for visitors:

- **An observation room with large windows overlooking the prime view of the creek:** This room is designed to capitalize on the site's magnificent views, offering an unobstructed perspective that is dedicated to celebrating the natural landscape. The observation area would be equipped with seating arrangements that cater to casual gatherings, allowing patrons to relax and appreciate the view.

- **Two community rooms with a folding partition that could be configured for dining events or presentations:** These rooms offer versatility with their design, as they can be combined into a single large space or divided for separate functions using the folding partition. This flexibility accommodates various functions from lectures and presentations to dining events, making it ideal for community gatherings and educational series.
- **A caterer's kitchen:** Although not a full-blown kitchen, it is designed for caterer convenience with necessary facilities for preparing and serving food. The kitchen is located strategically to allow easy access to the community rooms, facilitating seamless service during events.
- **Restrooms and utility spaces:** These essential facilities are grouped strategically to minimize infrastructural requirements while maximizing accessibility and convenience for attendees.
- **Multiple outdoor decks:** These provide additional space for visitors to enjoy the natural setting, extending the experience beyond the indoor environment. With levels that accommodate various interactions and stationary activities like seating or walking, the decks offer opportunities to engage with the site's serene atmosphere.
- **An observation tower allowing visitors to experience trees at crown level:** This feature encourages engagement with the arboretum's central theme - the celebration of trees. It allows guests to view the trees from a unique vantage point, thereby enhancing educational and observational opportunities.
- **Accessibility features including handicapped parking spots:** Accessibility is prioritized with paved paths and designated handicapped parking areas, ensuring that the facility is welcoming to all visitors.

These thoughtful design choices align the architecture closely with its intended purpose of environmental education and community engagement, all the while celebrating the natural beauty of the arboretum site.

Design Philosophy

Mr. Burik emphasized that the design focused not on the architecture itself, but on the celebration of trees. The architectural concept was meant to serve as a conduit to appreciate trees and nature, rather than overshadow them with grand structural designs. He detailed the use of natural materials throughout the design, ensuring a seamless blend between the built environment and the arboretum's natural surroundings.

The pathways leading to and surrounding the structure were thoughtfully crafted to act as a transition for visitors, shifting them from the urban landscapes they come from into a tranquil natural setting. This approach was part of a broader philosophy to create a serene atmosphere conducive to relaxation and reflection.

In keeping with this theme, Mr. Burik proposed the use of vertical siding for the building's exterior, potentially employing metal for its durability and low maintenance needs. This choice was aimed at reducing the amount of upkeep required, ensuring that the focus remained on the arboretum's natural elements. Additionally, stone elements were incorporated into the design, echoing the textures found along the creek's berms and adding a naturalistic touch that would tie the structure visually and thematically to its surroundings.

Security Considerations

Security features included motion-sensor lighting, strategic landscaping without easy access paths, and roll-down security grills for the windows when the building is closed. Mr. Burik explained that the motion-sensor lighting was designed to discourage any vandalism or unauthorized access by illuminating the area if movement is detected. He acknowledged that while the lighting might occasionally activate

when animals such as deer pass through, it would not significantly impact the surroundings. Additionally, the landscape design was intentionally crafted to deter entry by necessitating traversal through shrubbery and other natural barriers, which naturally limit easy access to the premises.

Mr. Burik suggested that the Commission review the plans and provide feedback at the next meeting, encouraging them to consider any adjustments or enhancements that might better serve the community or the site's objectives. He offered to build a physical model of the design, which would allow members to better visualize the project and proposed features, emphasizing that the process should be collaborative and driven by community needs.

Moreover, Mr. Burik recommended that the City obtain budget figures from local builders to ensure realistic financial planning for the project. He noted his own detachment from current construction costs due to his lengthy time away from the profession, therein stressing the importance of leveraging local expertise to inform project budgeting accurately.

Mr. Varga expressed enthusiasm for the design, noting it aligned perfectly with his vision for the arboretum. He emphasized that the proposal captured the essence of what he had hoped to develop, praising the way the architecture integrated with the natural elements of the site.

Mr. Traxler commented that the location was ideal, providing good views and proximity to the bridge, which would facilitate easy access while preserving the scenic and serene qualities of the site. He noted that the tower would be visible from the road, hypothesizing that its presence would intrigue passersby and draw visitors in, further enhancing the arboretum's appeal and accessibility.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Berges was absent.

Mr. Boccabella had no comments.

Ms. Engelmann had no comments.

Ms. Johnson had no comments.

Ms. Pajak. had no comments.

Mr. Smith had no comments.

Mr. Traxler had no comments.

Ms. Wetzig had no comments.

Mr. Varga reminded everyone about the Willoway Nurseries Plant Sale on Saturday, noting that he and Mr. Smith would be there from approximately 8:30 to 10:00 AM with the Tree Commission banner, Arbor Day promotional materials, and student applications.

AUDIENCE:

There were no comments from the audience.

ADJOURN: 8:22 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Englemann 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. Wetzig, “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, October 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Rick Varga, Chair

ATTEST:

Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council