

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, October 9, 2024

The Chairman Rick Varga, called the meeting to order at 7:27 P.M.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Megan Engelmann; Mary Johnson; 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, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

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, September 11, 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"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes".

The vote was 7 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

OVERVIEW OF 2024 ARBOR DAY EVENTS

Mr. Varga stated he wanted to thank everyone on the Tree Commission for a fabulous job and he believed the Arbor Day event went extremely well. He added he was very pleased with everything and noted the jazz band was outstanding which was a great asset in addition to the petting zoo, and the food and beverages. Mr. Varga noted this event took a tremendous amount of effort. He advised each member of the Commission can provide their feedback and thoughts on how the event went as well as areas for improvements.

Ms. Berges stated everything went very well and the weather was beautiful which certainly helped. She noted the event was very well-attended. She suggested one of the items for improvement is having yard signs to help promote the event and they could read the first Saturday of October promoting Arbor Day then they can reuse them every year. She advised they noticed they did not have table coverings so next year they may want to consider adding table coverings.

Ms. Berges suggested hanging the Arbor Day Banner in front of the stage so that people walking by the playground know what is going on. She suggested they may want to bring duct tape as well as packing tape with them next year to avoid rushing to get those last minute. She also suggested ice for the event. Ms. Berges observed that they seemed to be closing up earlier and there were not any other people staying later so she recommended possibly shortening the event by about 30 minutes, so it would be a two- and half-hour event not a three-hour event.

Mr. Boccabella suggested signage for the water and cider noting, "free/help yourself," or something to that effect. He added a lot of people seemed hesitant to take those drinks and seemed unsure if it was free or not.

Ms. Englemann liked the idea Ms. Berges had of having the sign on the poles. She also thinks that because the park is right there and it is busy all the time if they could possibly be able to have a sign there for maybe the week or two prior to the event since there are a lot of families coming through there and it may give the event a bit more visibility. Her goal for next year is to have more vendors as she believed the discussed it being an ideal opportunity for local businesses. She noted she was dismayed some vendors did not come but believes that reaching out to other businesses will be beneficial. Ms. Englemann stated she knows they all planned on doing business outreach then they did not have enough time. Mr. Varga stated that he reached out to a couple businesses but also did not receive a response.

Ms. Johnson agreed that it was a really great event and noted this was her first Arbor Day celebration, and she thought it went really well. Ms. Johnson suggested for next year an additional table and signage. In addition, she does not recall if there was information on the table to signup to win a tree. She noted there was information about the trees and asked if there was a sign that said one per household, Avon residents. She added the same thing for the counting jar and any sorts of activities going on they could put a sign on each individual table. Ms. Johnson suggested plastic 8 x 10 easel frames to display for better visibility. She also added that an easel, flipchart or dry erase board with the agenda of the day would be helpful so if people came in at 11:00 a.m. and they heard the Mayor speak and they participated, they would know there was going to be a tree planting, and they would know to look for the scavenger hunt information. She added information such as the raffle drawing will take place at noon, then at 1:00 p.m. the rain barrel instructions, etc. just so people know in general what is taking place at the event. She observed everyone liked the idea of the yard signs and believes additional locations would be great spots to advertise. Ms. Johnson stated that everyone that she talked to seemed to be having a great time and people stayed around for a long time so that was nice to see. Mr. Varga also believed the raffle went very well and thanked Ms. Wetzig for a great job.

Mr. Smith stated the one area of concern for him was the stage area. He stated in case of poor weather conditions, he highly recommends a tent over the stage as students may not want to participate in the rain. He added last year the Avon choir performed and when they were finished it started to pour. He added they got very lucky but believes that luck will run out at some point. Mr. Smith stated if they have a tent over the stage and it is raining people can stand under in addition to the other tents they have at the event. Mr. Smith stated he feels strongly on arranging for a tent to be over the stage as it could solve a lot of problems especially since a large part of this event involves the youth. He also agreed that more signage is needed and mentioned the area of Storybook Trail in particular. He noted he would like to see a sign that says, "Arbor Day Storybook Trail" and arrows pointing which would be in the area of the children's playground in addition to one right by the entrance. He observed the sign that was by the Storybook Trail is gone and it is just an empty frame. Mr. Smith advised when he went up to the library after Arbor Day he spoke with Donna Kelly-Sprinkle, Librarian at the Avon Library who advised that she recently found out about the missing sign. Mr. Smith stated he believes that people at Arbor Day had no idea what was back there. He noted the story was awesome and he went back in that area to read it. Mr. Smith stated signage with arrows for next year would be important.

Mr. Smith observed that when people were speaking about the rain barrel their voices had projected over a bit. He stated the speakers and similar activities would be best to take place further to the side and not on or by the main stage area. He advised when Curt Vigg was playing the Neil Young tribute band the voices from the rain barrel feature carried over and disrupted some of the performance. Mr. Smith felt that the disruption ruined the continuity of things at the event so he would rather have featured areas like that at a farther distance. Ms. Johnson added that a timed agenda could help. Mr. Smith agreed and said he had no idea there was going to be someone discussing the rain barrel near the stage.

Mr. Smith advised that Betsy Thayer, Wild Hooves Farms Petting Zoo would need to be booked out one year in advance. He suggested the Commission vote to hire her for the next Arbor Day in October 2025 so they could officially get her booked.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Berges to book Betsy Thayer, Wild Hooves Farms Petting Zoo one year in advance for the next Arbor Day Event to be held in October, 2025, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, “yes”; Ms. Engelmann, “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.

Mr. Smith added he observed many kids and adults alike including himself that were petting the animals. Mr. Boccabella believed the petting zoo was a big hit and maybe for next year they may want to think of another location, possibly move some of the tents back, and have the petting zoo in a different area maybe off to the side a little more. Mr. Smith stated he returned two days later to look at the site such as where the pine trees were planted. He agreed that area would be a good location or even right next to the playground where the lamp post is to have the petting zoo closer to the kids activity area. He added at one point he directed kids and parents over to that area to come see the petting zoo. Mr. Smith felt relocating it to the front would be a better location.

Mr. Traxler stated he also does not want to repeat what was already said and advised they should go through the expenses to see where they are at and review to see if any changes need to be made. He suggested to go through the tree instructions this Saturday, October 12, 2024. Mr. Varga indicated that they are going to try to put a binder together with all of the Arbor Day information so they can go through it. He added he will email everyone in case anyone has any receipts or bills such as for the scavenger hunt. He noted they can put that information in the binder such as how they performed a specific task and what took place as well as the raffle information. Mr. Varga stated it would be his preference for everything to be detailed for next year. He commented in the instance someone is absent from a meeting they will have a complete binder with details available to them. Mr. Varga advised he will work on the agenda for next year's event.

Ms. Wetzig commented that there are many great ideas, and she believes the event went very well. She noted they had approximately 50 kids for the scavenger hunt, and would need more prizes for next year. She suggested recycling bins for the empty water bottles and soda cans because there was not one at the event. She noted that she received a suggestion to include another beer option such as White Claw or something similar although she is unsure what that would entail in regard to the liquor permit. Ms. Wetzig relayed a suggestion to position tents more off to the side in order to open up the whole green field in the back like where the Storybook Trail and scavenger hunt area are located.

She noted this is a great area and she heard comments from some people that did not know or see there was a path by the scavenger hunt and noted kids may see it and relay to their parents they have to walk through there. Ms. Wetzig stated it would be good advertising for the City as well. Ms. Wetzig stated regarding the tree giveaway she will revise the sheet and will include “Avon Residents - Sign Up for Your Free Tree,” and a place to list an address and 1 tree per address to avoid situations where three in the same family are signing up for a tree which is not their intention with the sign-up sheet. Ms. Wetzig believes expanding on signage is a great idea and they could add their logo throughout. Mr. Vara advised everything went really well and they just need to adjust a few things for the next Arbor Day.

Mr. Traxler stated he would like to recognize the help that they received from the Garden Club and Lion's Club. He added they both were really great and are partners. Ms. Berges asked of Ms. Wetzig how much money was raised for the Leo Club? Ms. Wetzig advised \$200. Wetzig stated the Leo Club was there as well as some senior high school students who they are going to miss next year. She added the students indicated they really enjoyed the Arbor Day event. Ms. Wetzig advised they need to get pictures of everyone together at Arbor Day and observed they have not been getting enough pictures taken the past couple years. She mentioned she tried to take some pictures this year. Mr. Varga also noted that there was an article in the Morning Journal about Arbor Day which was very nice.

DISCUSSION OF TREE CITY USA EVENT IN 2025

Mr. Varga advised that they are well on schedule with the Tree City USA event to be held in 2025 and are working on applying for the Growth Awards for Tree City USA. Mr. Varga stated they will have a workgroup meeting on Tree City USA in the near future as the application needs to be completed by December 1, 2024. He commented they are hosting the Tree City USA event which it is estimated that 50 cities will be participating from all over northern Ohio. He noted it is a very big deal and they are excited to be hosting this event. Mr. Varga advised it will be held at Tom's Country Place and they are planning to have speakers from a couple of Ohio State University professors in addition to a speaker from Willoway Nurseries to discuss tree topics.

Ms. Wetzig stated she was wondering what kinds of speakers, topics or themes/program they were considering having for the Tree City USA event. Mr. Varga stated Jim Chatfield, who is a plant pathologist from Ohio State University and whom will be likely talking about Oak Wilt or some related tree disease. He added hopefully the other speaker will be Joe Boggs, an Entomologist from Ohio State University, and he will likely be talking about exotic insects particularly the Emerald Ash Borer, Longhorn Beetles etc., but everything that they discuss is going to be pertinent to what is currently happening in any affected cities. Mr. Varga stated he is confident that Mr. Boggs will also likely discuss the Spotted Lanternfly as that has become the biggest issue in the insect world at this present time. Ms. Wetzig stated she has December 15, 2024, as the next date to talk about speakers, budget etc. Mr. Varga stated that is why it is important for us to develop a plan/schedule. Ms. Wetzig stated that is something to think about when putting things together.

INTERVIEWS: QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION OF THE APPLICANTS FOR THE STUDENT TREE COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Varga opened the discussion for the student Tree Commission Member applicants and advised that he will call a student up and they can introduce themselves, include their name and address for the record, and explain why they want to be on the Tree Commission. He added following their statement, members of the Tree Commission are going to ask a few questions. He advised after they interview the applicants they plan have to have an Executive Session to discuss the student candidates to for recommendation of appointment. He added in that instance everyone would be required to leave while that takes place. After the Executive Session, the Tree Commission will recommend a student to Mayor Jensen and the Mayor will make his official appointment as he has final approval.

Mr. Varga said if more than one student member is ever to be considered an Ordinance would need to be passed by City Council.

Trevor Grzelak, 3384 Truxton Place, stated personally the reason he wants to join the Tree Commission is because he wants to make a more personal connection with teams and youth, especially as he has a real interest in improving and preserving the environment. He added he has personally seen a lot of the work

that goes into events like Arbor Day, and you can tell there is a lot of passion and effort from the Commission and he could spark interest in kids to participate to get community service hours or something and develop a real interest in preserving the environment and protecting trees. Mr. Grzelak stated he believes he would be able to do that just by being a part of the high school and getting groups and other kids involved.

Ms. Berges thanked Mr. Grzelak and the jazz club for being at Arbor Day on Saturday, and for his role in getting the jazz club advisor and Mr. Smith in touch with each other. She was also grateful to Mr. Grzelak for being at the last Tree Commission meeting which was helpful. Ms. Berges inquired of Mr. Grzelak what his thoughts were of the Arbor Day event and asked if he was able to stay longer after the band was done performing? Mr. Grzelak stated that he was at the Arbor Day event for awhile and he thought it was a great event and it really brings the community together. He added he agrees that there could be a bit more of a schedule structure for the event, but he thought it went great. Mr. Grzelak noted that they walked through the Storybook Trail as well and observed there were a lot of kids present. He also stated he believes this event has a lot of opportunity to create real interest in the environment.

Mr. Boccabella thanked Mr. Grzelak for attending the Tree Commission meeting this evening and observed from his application that he was involved in the Good Knights organization in Amherst. Mr. Boccabella asked Mr. Grzelak what he learned from his past experiences as part of that organization. Mr. Grzelak stated what he learned from being active in the Good Knights organization is that anyone from any background can be brought together. He added it is such a great thing for that community and gave an example, that one person in a wheelchair personally brands the headboards as his role in the organization. Mr. Grzelak noted they get to work with all different types of people from all different walks of life, and it truly brings people together to contribute and it is a great, feel-good thing that everyone gets to be part of at the Good Knights organization.

Ms. Englemann inquired what Mr. Grzelak's plans are after high school and asked if he is going into music? Mr. Grzelak stated he wants to do music while in college and is hoping to go to the Air Force Academy and noted his brother is part of the Air Force Academy. He added he will probably continue to play and be part of something like a jazz club or something similar.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Grzelak for being present at the Tree Commission meeting today and for expressing an interest in being a part of the Tree Commission. She stated he already has answered all of her questions.

Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Grzelak for organizing the jazz band to perform at Arbor Day. Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Grzelak has any conflicts on attending the Tree Commission meetings one Wednesday a month? Mr. Grzelak responded he does not have any conflicts in attending any Tree Commission meetings.

Mr. Traxler inquired if Mr. Grzelak could expand on any commitments as far as being a part of band. Mr. Grzelak stated he usually has marching band from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; however, for Wednesdays specifically it is from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. which gives him about 2 hours before arriving for the meeting. He added he has competition on Saturday, but it is not the whole day so if there are Tree Commission events, he would still be able to help with that and it would not be a problem. Mr. Traxler thanked Mr. Grzelak for all of his help in arranging the jazz band for the Arbor Day event and he wanted to point out to everyone that they can only appoint one person to this role right now, but that everyone is welcome to be involved in the Tree Commission. He added they especially look for opportunities for young people to become involved and they appreciate everyone.

Mr. Varga added he would love to see everyone of them come to a meeting and get involved with the Tree Commission and to help to plan these events. He advised they have a large event approaching that takes place in May 2025. Mr. Varga added everyone is welcome but unfortunately, they can only pick one student for the student role at the Commission.

Ms. Wetzig thanked Mr. Grzelak for his help with Arbor Day, and he had answered all the questions she had.

Olivia Pajak, 3178 Napa Boulevard, stated she has lived in Avon her entire life and she currently attends Avon High School and is part of the Varsity Cross Country team. She added she has been to many of the parks in Avon, and she is always running so she appreciates some nicely spaced trees for shade. She stated she has been to a lot of National Parks throughout the country, so she has always had a very strong interest in conservation and environmental sciences which is something she would like to pursue in her future. Ms. Pajak stated she believes this would be a great opportunity for her to see how that career would work at the local level, and she thinks this would be a good opportunity for her.

Ms. Berges thanked Ms. Pajak for being at the meeting tonight and she asked what grade she is in? Ms. Pajak answered that she is a junior. Ms. Berges stated she is impressed with all of Ms. Pajak's extracurricular activities and inquired if she is in the Save Club? Ms. Pajak confirmed that she is in the Save Club. Ms. Berges asked what made Ms. Pajak decide to join the Save Club? Ms. Pajak responded that throughout her life they have been traveling to National Parks so that is been a big part of her passions and what she wants to focus on later in life specifically environmental sciences and forestry/wildlife management in addition to overall conservation, so she thinks that would definitely suit her passions and would help her gain experience.

Mr. Boccabella thanked Ms. Pajak for attending the meeting today and asked her what would she say is her greatest asset or strength that she feels she would bring to the Tree Commission. Ms. Pajak stated she has been a Girl Scout for about 10 years, and she is a Girl Scout Ambassador. So she has been very active throughout her life with service by working closely with the community to help people. She added she is currently working on her growth award project with the elementary schools, Avon Eagles, and Garden Club to help implement a composting program to go along with their cafeteria and food waste. She added she thinks her experience in working with the community and being hands on in projects is going to be very helpful overall.

Ms. Englemann stated she is a Girl Scout troop parent so she knows Ms. Pajak peripherally and it is really nice to see her here in person today. Ms. Englemann stated she is very familiar with the work Ms. Pajak has been doing with Girl Scouts and it is very impressive. She thanked Ms. Pajak for being such a great role model to kids, it is really awesome to see.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Pajak what is her favorite National Park? Ms. Pajak responded it is a tough question to answer but she does get asked that question a lot. She added it would either be Glacier National Park in Montana or any National Park in Alaska because Alaska was amazing.

Mr. Smith asked where Ms. Pajak sees herself five years from now? Ms. Pajak responded she plans to be in college but is interested in environmental sciences, wildlife and forestry management fields because she wants to have a career possibly as a National Park Ranger. She added that has always been her end goal so hopefully something close to that via internships in addition to trying to get as close to the workings of that field as she can.

Mr. Traxler thanked Ms. Pajak for her interest and noted her resume is really impressive. He asked if Ms. Pajak had any conflicts with attending any of the Tree Commission meetings. Ms. Pajak advised that her after school extracurriculars are always right after school, and her cross-country practices would run to the latest at 5:30 p.m. so she would have plenty of time as well as in the Spring with track practices as that would also end at 5:30 p.m. She stated that all of her meets would be Saturday mornings and conflict free the rest of the day.

Ms. Wetzig felt that Ms. Pajak had answered all the questions she had and noted Ms. Pajak's resume was quite impressive and she thanked her for attending the Tree Commission meeting.

Mr. Varga stated as a side note they have different workgroups, and he would love to have the selected student to be involved in these different workgroups which address certain topics such as Tree City USA and Tree City Growth Awards. He added so it may not just be coming to the Wednesday night meetings and she could be involved with any workgroup since she is a non-voting student member. Mr. Varga added that because of the Ohio Sunshine Laws they cannot have a quorum as such they can only have three people present so Ms. Pajak could get involved in as many groups as she wishes. Mr. Varga advised they will make that information available to whoever is selected for recommendation of appointment on the Commission as a student member.

Aditya Rao was not present at the Tree Commission meeting to be interviewed.

Anthony Miceli, 3086 Stone Wheel Run Street, stated he is a junior in high school and 16 years old. Mr. Miceli stated the reason he wanted to join the Avon Tree Commission is because on March 7, 2024, the woods in his backyard were cut down to make room for a new development. He stated he loved and cared for those woods. Mr. Miceli stated that every single Monday he was mindful of any potential residual garbage that could have fallen off the garbage truck by that wooded area. Mr. Miceli noted that if he noticed any garbage that had fallen in the area he would collect it because he wanted to help the wildlife and plants. He added the woods meant a lot to him and to see them go was one of the most horrible experiences of his life. He stated that he wakes up almost every single morning and looks out his window and is hurt that the wooded area is no longer there. Mr. Miceli stated the reason he wants to be on this Tree Commission is because when the trees were cut down that day, the trees were defenseless and had no voice or say in the matter, and he wants to be that voice and help the trees. He added he does not want something like this to happen again and he wants to prevent deforestation and have activism for that and help the promotion of tree growth and health in Avon.

Ms. Berges thanked Mr. Miceli for attending the Tree Commission meeting and noted he also has quite a few extracurricular activities including the Save Club. She inquired if Mr. Miceli could elaborate more about the Save Club and what they do. Mr. Miceli stated the Save Club is where they have meetings regarding what they can do at the Avon High School like recycling programs to help make the high school more eco-friendly. He added what he likes to do is participate in events like beach cleanups such as Huntington Beach where garbage may have washed ashore including things like straws, plastic etc. He noted they clean any garbage up and bring their own individual bags and trash bags for the beach cleanup. Mr. Miceli that is what he wants to participate in, local cleanups.

Ms. Berges noted Mr. Miceli also indicated that he has extensive knowledge of tree health and that he is involved in tree planting and wildflower seeding and she asked if he could talk about that a little more. Mr. Miceli stated he wants to start his own non-profit called "Cleveland Native" and create a website for it. He added he has extensive tree knowledge because four years ago when the first letter was sent to his parents that the trees in the wooded area in his backyard were going to be cut down, he immediately became involved. Mr. Miceli stated in his free time he tries to learn and understand how trees work including how

they rely on one another. He noted he does not just focus on trees, as trees also involve biodiversity which is what can increase to promote tree health and is where he would like to stand presently. He noted he does not have the space or resources at his residence to plant trees, but he does plant wildflowers which is what he wants to base his environmental non-profit on so that he can help create a base foundation for those trees to grow in a healthy environment.

Mr. Boccabella thanked Mr. Miceli for being present today and asked if there are any special skills he is hoping to acquire by serving on the Tree Commission. Mr. Miceli stated he wants to learn first-hand how Avon and its habitats impact each other as well as how that can be supported. He advised he has future aspirations of being a dentist and wishes to participate in his local City Council and possibly even have a seat on the Council because he wants to continue this involvement throughout his adulthood and he wants to learn as much as he can firsthand as a high school student. Mr. Miceli stated as he moves forward in life he hopes to take these skills and adapt them to his future so that he can use that to his advantage.

Ms. Englemann thanked Mr. Miceli for being at the Tree Commission meeting and asked if there are any opportunities his high school or our City offer to be more green/environmentally friendly that he hopes to fuel or inspire other people to take action. Mr. Miceli stated there are definitely areas that are very hard to see gone such as how they are building a new car dealership where Maria's Field of Hope used to be by Planet Fitness. He just wants to take areas like that and impact them so they can be more biodiverse and have better eco systems. He added maybe stop the construction of big car dealerships or something that commits to fossil fuels as well as Avon protecting its habitats and ensures they are as healthy as they can be as he feels that that is the most important thing in Avon right now.

Mr. Varga stated that is what this Tree Commission is all about. He added they were formed to educate and make people aware of what is going on in Avon and how developers/construction workers take down every single tree without identifying any specific tree that they could save. He stated unfortunately it is a long process because there were no real tree ordinances in Avon before they came on board, and they have been working on re-wording a tree ordinance and they are still working on it. Mr. Varga added it is quite involved because there are different politics of who is going to do what and how they are going to be implemented. He stated but that is how everyone can help us because you would be involved with the City of Avon helping to save trees and put his voice forward with them to say "this is what we need to do," and if Council sees young students on the Tree Commission and attending Council Meetings with them and also saying "we need to do this," they are going to start listening more to what we have to say because it is especially all about fully representing ourselves to the Council Members.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Miceli for being present today at the Tree Commission meeting and noted he has quite an impressive resume. She inquired of Mr. Miceli if he could tell her a little bit about what he did as an LLS Organizer. Mr. Miceli stated that LLS is the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and for reasons personal to him, it is one of the priorities in his life that he feels strongly about and advocates for. He added as an organizer he works with his friends who are also organizers within that group, and they help to create specific group chats and tactics so they can raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Miceli for being at the meeting today. Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Miceli has ever read any works by Aldo Leopold? Mr. Miceli advised he has not read any of his works. Mr. Smith stated he has a book called "A Sand County Almanac," and recommended the book to Mr. Miceli. Mr. Smith added it was published in 1948 and it is as relevant today as it was then.

Mr. Traxler thanked Mr. Miceli for his interest in the Tree Commission. He inquired if Mr. Miceli has any conflicts as far as being available for Tree Commission meetings. He sees he is pretty involved already but

asked if there is anything that would hinder you from being involved with the Commission. Mr. Miceli stated he is very good at maintaining and managing his schedule and he works with a great boss and person who is very flexible on switching shifts if needed. He added he really manages his time to make sure he could attend his clubs regularly, organize his society, and work on his non-profit. He advised that he essentially uses his free time to his advantage by organizing his extracurriculars so they can all work out and so he can attend every single one that he is able.

Ms. Wetzig thanked Mr. Miceli for his passion for the environment and for attending. She added she does not have any further questions. Mr. Miceli stated that he would like to point out that he liked Ms. Wetzig's recycling idea about the Arbor Day event and believes that is something his high school could adapt to as they are missing some recycling processes so he believes they could utilize that idea. Ms. Johnson asked Mr. Miceli where he works, and he responded Dunkin' Donuts.

Mr. Varga thanked everyone for coming to the meeting today.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Berges thanked the student applicants for being here and stated there will be a chance for them to ask the Tree Commission questions if they would like under Audience Comments. She added she realized they did all the asking but they should certainly be able to ask the Commission questions.

Ms. Englemann stated she would like to find out about using the Avon Tree Commission logo to order patches in case they do a Girl Scout event. She inquired if that was something the Tree Commission or City would pay for or would she have to apply for that? She added sometimes when the Girl Scouts go to businesses many times the business will have a patch with their own logo.

Ms. Wetzig stated she thinks that would be good and liked that idea of the patches.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mr. Varga invited any audience members that may have questions for the Tree Commission as they are welcome to speak.

Ms. Pajak stated she was wondering how does the Commission work with the school district? She added she knows there has been a lot of construction projects at the high school such as re-organizing the parking lots etc. so she wanted to inquire how the Commission gets involved with matters like that? Mr. Varga stated they have not been involved in those particular matters regarding the schools. He added the only aspect they were involved in regarding the schools was for Willoway Nursery where they helped them get their plant sale organized but that was the only area they provided help with.

Ms. Berges commented that is a great question because at some point when they get a student on the Commission there is a program that is a K-12 program in which there are things that the school system can do and they would be looking to coordinate that with the schools and the student member. She advised there was also an interesting article recently that she is going to send to her school superintendent that talks about playgrounds and how there are a number of school systems that are making playgrounds greener and providing more shade trees and not just asphalt.

Ms. Berges added the Tree Commission is interested in the schools and that is one of the reasons they are excited about having a student member to say, "hey, what are we doing with the schools? Or could we get involved with...?" Ms. Berges also noted they are looking at the Save Club and have been in touch with the Advisor to have some members of the Tree Commission come to one of their meetings and talk. Ms. Berges thanked Ms. Pajak and noted that was a great question.

Mr. Grzelak stated he was curious in regard to the workgroups they mentioned prior, and if that is something he could get involved with even if he does not get the role on the Commission and is there anywhere he could find information on that? Mr. Varga responded that they would love to have him or anyone else who is interested and they are more than welcome. He added they have the student applicants' emails, and they will email all of that information and keep them aware and informed of what is going on with the Tree Commission. He added if anyone has any questions on anything they could email them back and say they would love to help with a particular aspect such as a tree ordinance they want to work on and they have a workgroup and you thought "wow, I really want to do that." Mr. Varga stated they will try to keep them in the loop. He noted that email and media help to relay what they are doing, and they all are more than welcome to always help in any aspect as they are always looking for extra help.

Mr. Miceli stated he saw on the Arbor Day website that they work with the Arbor Day Foundation, and he has done a lot of research on it and he is really interested to work with the foundation so his question is how closely does the Tree Commission work with the Arbor Day Foundation or representatives. Mr. Varga stated the Arbor Day Foundation is the beginning of how they became a Tree City USA and is what they are hosting in May 2025 as that event is related to the Arbor Foundation. Mr. Varga added they are hosting the awards ceremony, and all those awards are given out by the Arbor Day Foundation located in Nebraska. Mr. Varga advised they are closely involved with the foundation and they help them in every aspect and it is why there is a host of growth awards that the Tree Commission is trying to accomplish as well, and the students could help as well and Mr. Miceli could possibly be part of that. Mr. Varga indicated there are many aspects which are contingent on working with the Arbor Day Foundation since it is all interwoven as far their tree plantings which is based on the growth awards in regards to how many trees are planted in your City and what your city is working on with an Urban Forester, what is your city doing to preserve land, all of these things are involved with the Arbor Day Foundation.

Mr. Varga advised he will send out as much information to anyone wanting it on all of this so they could look it over and say "we could do this or we could get this award." Ms. Johnson noted that the Tree City USA event will take place on May 15, 2025. Mr. Varga noted for the Tree City USA Awards Ceremony. It encompasses all the cities, arborists, urban foresters who attend this event from all over Ohio especially northeast Ohio. Mr. Varga also noted that there are great speakers at this event and any student that wishes to attend could let them know so they have a spot reserved for them. Mr. Miceli inquired where it would be held? Mr. Varga advised Tom's Country Place which is right down the road.

Duane Evans, 2596 Daegan Drive, Avon, stated he is a new resident to Avon as well as to Ohio. Mr. Evans advised that he is also representing Fairfield Estates, Phase 3 Homeowner's Association. He stated that the Rural Lorain County Water Authority (RLCWA) has come to the HOA recently looking to gain access to some property to look for an easement on the west side of their subdivision. Mr. Evans stated ultimately, they want to clear cut all the trees to the west side of the subdivision. He noted RLCWA are willing to work with them and it is about 1,115 feet in which they are offering a nominal fee to the HOA for the right to access, clear cut and to be able to access a water line they claim was installed in 1970 of which they have not maintained any sort of access from what he was advised of a couple weeks ago.

He added the RLCWA have occasionally come in with a small utility vehicle to check on the easement but ultimately determined now is the time to clear cut the property in case they should ever have a need to come in and do maintenance or repair/replace anything the trees would not be in the way any longer. Mr. Evans stated he wanted to bring the concern to the Tree Commission and ask if there are any suggestions from a nature or homeowner perspective that may help their negotiations with them. He added they are looking to be able to plant some trees outside of the right of way. He noted the HOA has a 25-foot piece

of land on the west side of their property. He stated where their pipeline runs they are looking for a 15 foot on clearing on either side of the pipeline to ensure they have access. Mr. Evan stated on the northside 100% goes over to the edge of their property (the 25 feet of the HOA) and on the southside there is some room yet, but he wanted to bring the concern to see if there is any feedback or suggestions on negotiating with them. He advised they are offering to negotiate and work with the HOA now and are offering the nominal fee to cover the right to access; however, at the end of the day, if they as the HOA are too difficult, RLCWA has essentially informed them that they have the right to eminent domain and they would move forward regardless.

Ms. Berges inquired of Mr. Evans how old are the trees? Mr. Evans stated he is new to Avon and the subdivision, but the RLCWA mentioned the pipeline was installed in the early 1970s, so he is estimating the trees have naturally grown since or soon after that pipeline was installed. Mr. Evans stated it is his understanding that the property next door used to be farmland which was then sold to the developer, and he is unsure if any trees were cut at that time but basically the farmer sold to the developer and built right next to it and the trees have grown since that 1970 timeframe and are still there. Ms. Berges asked Mr. Evans if he has been in touch with anyone at the City at all? Mr. Evans stated he has not and mentioned by chance he happened to meet Mr. Smith who enlightened him to this Commission and invited him to come and introduce as a starting point if there are any other options or where to go from here.

Mr. Traxler asked when Mr. Evans received the letter. Mr. Evans stated approximately a couple months ago. Mr. Evans noted a call he had with a person referred to as Joe at the RLCWA around the 20th of September. Mr. Evans commented there was a change at the board a couple months ago and now with the new board is trying to get the HOA perspective and let the RLCWA know what their perspective is as well. Ms. Englemann asked if they mentioned a date as to when they are working to clear this area? Mr. Evans stated there is no firm date and the RLCWA is looking to hopefully work with the HOA and come to an accommodation that suits everybody but there is no firm date on their side to get this done but the RLCWA also does not want this to get dragged out forever either.

Mr. Varga stated there are three people he could recommend he get in touch with such as Ryan Cummins, City Engineer; Pam Fetcher, Economic and Planning Coordinator; and John Gasior, Law Director as a starting point to see where things stand. Mr. Varga stated in addition Mr. Evans can email Rose Seighman, the Mayor's Assistant, to explain his situation then most likely the Mayor would send him as the City Arborist to meet with him and go over what trees are currently there and begin some type of identification in regards to the size of trees, species of trees, what they are going to do, that would be the next step so if he could do those things that would be his next step. Ms. Seighman could discuss this with the Mayor and they could set up a meeting with him and Mr. Evans HOA. Mr. Varga added then he could discuss the matter with Ms. Fetcher, Mr. Cummins, and Mr. Gasior and see where they are at for a starting point.

Mr. Evans appreciated the guidance and noted from the Arborist standpoint, if there are any recommendations for what trees they should ask for or if there were some areas they would need to have them put in and they could commit to that. Mr. Varga responded that is exactly why they want to evaluate the situation, the environment, what trees would be conducive, where they would want to put them, what species and what they are trying to accomplish.

Mr. Evans appreciated the feedback and their time. Mr. Varga stated hopefully they can work something out because we want to save the trees and a reason they are trying to work with the Ordinances to save trees like this and regulations for right of ways, construction, buffer zones, etc. Ms. Englemann stated from personal experience, they happened to see building happening on the corner of her street and they talked to Ms. Fetcher who was able to set up alerts for them so anytime there was a meeting that pertained to

the property, they were invited to a City Council meeting. She added he could also voice his concerns to City Council too since he would be on the record. She noted to continue voicing his concerns in what he hopes to happen, his intention on being a good neighbor and expecting the same from this company coming in. Ms. Englemann stated they were successful in negotiating the brush being taken down with responsible planting happening afterwards. She wished Mr. Evans luck in his endeavor. Ms. Englemann also suggested Mr. Evans find out who his Council representative is and contact them as well.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 8:25 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Berges and seconded by Ms. Wetzig to Enter into Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing the Appointment of a Public Employee or Official, and the vote was: Ms. Englemann, "yes"; Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes", Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes".

The vote was 7 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

RECONVENE 8:36 p.m.

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

The vote was 7 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR JENSEN OF A STUDENT TREE COMMISSION MEMBER

A motion was made by Ms. Englemann and seconded by Ms. Berges to Recommend to Mayor Jensen, Olivia Pajak, for Appointment as a student non-voting, non-paid member of the Tree Commission for a term of two years, and the vote was: Ms. Johnson, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "no"; Ms. Wetzig, "no", Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes". Ms. Englemann, "yes".

The vote was 5 for and 2 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

ADJOURN: 8:38 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Traxler to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission, and the vote was: Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes", Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Englemann, "yes", Ms. Johnson, "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, November 13, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council