

Village of Fox Point Tree Commission

Minutes of September 14, 2017

A meeting of the Village of Fox Point Tree Commission was held in the Village Hall Conference Room on Thursday, September 14, 2017, at 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Trustee Eric Fonstad (Chair), Karen Grube & Louise Petering

Ex Officio: John Gall, Village Forester

The meeting notice was mailed to the *North Shore Now* and to all others as required by the State open meeting laws, and posted on the Village website and bulletin boards.

Trustee Fonstad called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. No persons indicated that they wished to address the Commission.

2. Approval of Minutes.

After making a correction, the minutes of the March 30, 2017 meeting were approved.

3. Old Business

a. Status of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Infestation in the Village

Forester Gall noted that he expects visible evidence of the die off of ash trees in the Village from EAB to become apparent to residents in the next year or two. He said that signs are currently visible to those who are trained at identifying the disease. Tree crowns are thinning, especially along the North edge of parking lots where the asphalt acts as a heat sink that apparently promotes the growth of the tree destroying EAB larva.

Forester Gall reported that, in addition to the 176 between 6" to 12" Village ash trees that received soil injection treatment in 2017, 443 greater than 12" ash trees received trunk injection treatments. He plans to treat 448 trees with trunk injections in 2018. A total of 891 or 62% of Village ash trees will be under treatment. The remaining 547 Village ash trees or 38% will be removed. He expects to remove about 200 of these trees over the fall/winter.

b. Addressing Bluff Ash Issues

Forester Gall said that, if asked by property owners about removing trees from the bluff, he generally advises them to remove the ash trees as long as they do it in a responsible manner, removing no more than 20% of the trees on the bluff. He noted that fortunately in general less than 20% of the bluff trees are ash trees. In response to a question, he indicated that this applies to ravines as well as lake side bluffs.

c. Arbor Day Planning

Ms. Grube reported that she is working on plans for the 2018 Arbor Day observance which will be April 27. The program will be similar to the program presented this year at Stormonth. The Commission discussed holding an Arbor Day observance at Mapledale. It was agreed to explore

holding the Arbor Day observance at Mapledale in 2019 and alternating between the two schools in subsequent years.

The members of the Commission discussed maintaining the Villages Tree City and Bird City designations. Forester Gall will be renewing the Tree City designation and Ms. Grube indicated that the Garden Club will handle funding the Bird City designation.

d. Indian Creek Woods - Ash Removal and Replanting

Forester Gall stated that he has been trying to develop a plan to address the removal of ash trees in the Indian Creek woods. He believes that ash trees make up 90% of the trees in the woods and that the ash trees are starting to die. Most likely, a winter harvest of the trees will be required. Upon motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously adopted, the Commission directed Forester Gall to prepare a plan for removal of the ash trees in the Indian Creek woods for consideration by the Village Manager and the Village Board as a budget item for 2019.

e. Aldo Leopold Benches

Forester Gall reported that the Aldo Leopold benches have not yet been installed. The Department of Public Works is helping to develop signs to identify the benches as having been built from reclaimed ash tree lumber.

f. Stormonth and Mapledale Response to EAB

Forester Gall reported that his meeting with Mapledale went well. Nine large ash trees next to the Mapledale school parking lot were removed. In addition, the Village removed 25 ash trees from inside the fence at the detention pond south of the school. He is still trying to schedule a meeting with Stormonth.

g. Bell Road Triangle Eagle Scout Project

The Bell Road Triangle Eagle Scout project was installed in June. Installation was supervised by the Department of Public Works. The Little Library will be installed later this fall.

h. Status of Rain Gardens

Forester Gall expressed special thanks to Ms. Grube for working with Village staff to identify plants to save and plants to remove from the Village rain gardens. The rain gardens were improved vastly by this work and look great. Ms. Petering and Ms. Grube added more native plants to the rain gardens over the summer. There is a patch of reed canary grass that needs to be treated and removed from the rain garden by the police station.

3. New Business

a. Proposal for Village Green Infrastructure Committee

Mr. Fonstad reported on Village Board discussions of a proposal to convert the Tree Commission into a Green Infrastructure Committee. The proposal would create a committee that, in addition to developing a tree management program with the goal of enhancing the Village through the planting of vegetation while maintaining and improving the existing landscape of Village trees

and the special character of our urban forest, would seek to identify environmentally-related funding and cost-saving opportunities specific to the Village and coordinate with area organizations and schools to pursue opportunities to (1) engage and educate residents on Village specific environmental issues and (2) improve Village life through Village specific environmental stewardship. Mr. Fonstad reported that, at the request of the Board, Village staff prepared an alternative proposal that would focus on communication and education.

Mr. Fonstad reported that, at the September Village Board meeting, trustees in attendance stated that Village staff, as well as many outside organizations, already address a wide assortment of environmental concerns and that the proposed new committee would only burden the staff with unnecessary work. Mr. Fonstad stated that he recommended that the Board retain the Tree Commission in its present form whether or not it decides to create a new general environmental committee. The Tree Commission has a clear mission and has functioned well to preserve and enhance the valuable tree resources of the Village since its formation in 1961. He also noted to the Board that the Tree Commission occasionally assists staff with questions about rain gardens and Indian Creek vegetation that are not strictly within its charter but which further resident's interests. He expressed his opinion that the proposal before the Board is so general and undefined that it would not be effective and would not add to the quality of life in the Village. He reported that at the September Board meeting staff also recommended that the Board not adopt the proposal.

b. NOAA Coastal Resilience Grant

Mr. Fonstad distributed information about a NOAA Coastal Resilience Grant which may be a source of funding to assist the Village in addressing bluff and ravine tree issues. He reported that Village staff is investigating the possibilities presented by this information.

c. Forester's Recommendations Regarding Tree Blights

Mr. Fonstad reported that, in response to questions from a resident, he asked the Village Forester for recommendations about treating tree blights. He stated that the Village Forester investigated the matter, determined that the blights are seasonal blights that commonly occur at the end of summer dry spells and do not cause permanent damage to the trees, and recommended that the Village not treat Village trees against these tree blights.

d. Forester's Activities Report

The Forester had no additional information to report to the Commission.

e. Discussion of Additional Funding for Seasonal Landscape Maintenance

Forester Gall reported that he has had discussions with the Village Manager about including funding for seasonal landscape maintenance in the upcoming budget discussions.

f. Discuss Future Meeting Dates and Topics

The next meeting date is Thursday, December 14, 2017, at 4:00 p.m.

5. Any other matters that may come before the Tree Commission (informational only – no action taken).

Ms. Petering recommended that the volunteer ash tree in the Santa Monica median north of Bell Road be removed.

Forester Gall reported that the Village planted 104 trees this summer.

Ms. Grube reported that Nancy Warner told her that she will no longer be able to continue to serve on the Tree Commission. Forester Gall said that he has an individual in mind that he will recommend that the Village President appoint to the Tree Commission to fill Ms. Warner's spot.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.