

TREE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

*State of Texas Building, 401 E. Franklin, 5th Floor
Monday, December 13, 2004 – 3:30 p.m.*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Charlotte Johnson, Chair - Parks Board
Oscar Mestas, Vice Chair - Texas Forest Service
Dr. Tammy Bendele – Horticultural Background
Peter Beste – At Large
Eileen Karlsruher - At Large
Georgina Maldonado – West Texas Urban Forestry Council
Lewis Wright, Landscape Architect

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brent Pearson, Arborist - Street Department
Kevin Elkins, Assistant City Attorney
Rosemary G. Borrego, Secretary - Street Department

Absent:

Wynn Anderson, At Large
John White, Arborist

1. Meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes –

Motion by Eileen Karlsruher to approve the Minutes to the meeting of October 11, 2004. Motion seconded by Oscar Mestas. Motion carried.

3. Discussion and Action on Proposed Project Completion Timeline – Charlotte Johnson

Charlotte Johnson passed around a proposed timeline for Board members to review and see if it's a realistic timeline. First four items have been accomplished and do not have to be discussed. Remaining items detailed in the proclamation that formed the Tree Board and that we need to accomplish are:

- a. Adopt-a-Median
- b. Community Forestry Work Plan
- c. Tree Care Ordinance
- d. Tree City USA

All items are to be accomplished by November 2005 to qualify for Tree City USA.

Motion by Georgina Maldonado that Agenda Item No. 3 be moved for discussion until after Agenda Item No. 9 has been discussed. Motion seconded by Eileen Karlsruher. All in favor.

4. Discussion and Action on Arbor Day Celebration – Charlotte Johnson

Charlotte Johnson reported that the Arbor Day Celebration was very successful, and that we received good publicity through KDBC Channel 4 with several spots in their morning news. The Police Department participated in the celebration, and Oscar Mestas' tree-planting demonstration was very popular.

Charlotte Johnson also suggested that the Parks Department should be the appropriate department to display the Fall Arbor Day Proclamation as they are the department administering the Memorial Tree Program. Brent Pearson will deliver the Proclamation to the Parks Department.

5. Discussion and Action on Memorial Tree Program – Parks Department

No one from Parks Department was present at the meeting. Brent Pearson stated Yolanda Cordova from El Paso Green Sweep Committee visited funeral homes in the area to ask if they would display brochures in their reception areas and lobbies. She will be going to baby stores, maternity wards, etc., to ask to get the brochures displayed, and is looking for display stands to distribute for the brochures.

Reference an inquiry from Georgina Maldonado, Brent Pearson stated that the memorial trees are being planted during the Arbor Day celebrations. The applications do specify part of town preferred but they are not told a specific tree. The recipients are invited to the ceremony and given a certificate. Application also gives them a choice of several approved trees, and a second choice.

Brent Pearson stated that there was an interest by Walt Phillips who serves on the Parks Board to buy a grove (3 trees) in memory of his wife but is requesting a specific location at Diana and Gateway. This is the Old Glory memorial. It is not a park, and the area belongs to the Flag Foundation who received a grant to do landscaping. Brent stated that it would be difficult to put anything in there until they finish their project. Also, this is not City property. It is being leased by the Flag Foundation from the Community College.

Ms. Johnson stated that it would be best to ask Mr. Phillips to work with the Flag Foundation, unless he would like to place the grove somewhere else.

6. Discussion and Action on Adopt-a-Median Program - Brent Pearson

Brent stated that it is about 85% complete at this time.

Eileen Karlsruher stated that when she met with Joyce Wilson, Ms. Wilson mentioned that the City of Arlington, Virginia has a good adopt-a-median ordinance, and that if we have trouble finding it in the website that she would help us out.

Brent needs comments from Board. According to the timeline this program is due in May 2005.

7. Update and Discussion on Approved Tree and Plant List – Brent Pearson

No modifications received. Stated that the contractors are utilizing this list for their designs and being very aware of what plants should be in the north east and in the east side.

8. Update and Discussion on Tree Care Ordinance – Oscar Mestas

Mr. Mestas stated they are still welcoming any kind of feedback on information passed out before. Doesn't see a problem with getting first draft by February 2005.

9. Discussion and Action on Community Forestry Work Plan – Dr. Tammy Bendele

Dr. Bendele distributed copies of a plan with revisions made after the last meeting to include the involvement of entities responsible for the action in specific year. Corrections are to be sent back to her.

Eileen Karlsruher met with City Manager, and she did not have any additional comments. She seemed very supportive of what we want to do. We need to go forward with a final draft. Eileen Karlsruher suggests we give it to City Manager with a cover letter and have her distribute to Council.

Motion by Eileen Karlsruher to approve the Community Forestry Work Plan with the budget item highlighted and to make it a final report; seconded by Oscar Mestas. All in favor. Charlotte Johnson will write the cover letter. Eileen Karlsruher and Dr. Tammy Bendele will go with Charlotte Johnson to meet with the City Manager.

3. At this time Agenda Item No. 3 was revisited. The only corrections made to the Timeline were in regard to the Community Forestry Work Plan: First draft due October 2004 and final draft December 2005, and then to be submitted to City Manager in January. If all these deadlines are met we can qualify the City of El Paso for Tree City USA.

Motion by Dr. Tammy Bendele that we approve the timeline with stated changes. Motion seconded by Peter Beste. Motion carried.

10. OPEN COMMENT PERIOD: Georgina Maldonado asked for her own information whether the following statement was true or false: Wants to clarify that the Tree Board attempts to influence the outcome of our local government referendum initiative or similar procedure through endorsement publicity or similar activity. The Board agreed that this statement was true.

Eileen Karlsruher stated that she was approached by someone reference the trees being cut down along the Franklin Canal. She was told that this is El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 (E.P.C.W.I.D. #1) property and that the Board does not have any authority in that area or in that governing body. She relayed the message and was told that he knew that but that he wants the Tree Board to write a letter to E.P.C.W.I.D. #1 asking them to quit cutting the trees. Options to handle this request are to invite him to attend these meetings; pass along to administration the request/complaint either to Parks and/or to Mr. Adrian Ocegueda, Mayor's Executive Assistant. Ms. Karlsruher will speak to Adrian Ocegueda.

Motion by Georgina Maldonado to adjourn; seconded by Oscar Mestas. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Next general meeting will be Monday, January 10, 2005 at 3:30 p.m., same location.

Approved: Charlotte Johnson, Chairman

Date: _____

Rosemary G. Borrego, Secretary