
CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER – Ron Fruit to chair meeting on behalf of Ryan Cairns who was attending by phone. Meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Ron Fruit, and a quorum was present; the meeting had been properly noticed.

ROLL CALL: Tree Board members: Ryan Cairns, Steve Downs, Ron Fruit. City Forester: Tess Barr-Hamblin. Director of Public Works: Jasen Glasbrenner. Absent: Larry Hallett, Mark Chambers.

CITIZEN CONCERN: Citizen Judy Shireman in attendance. Judy brought concern regarding trees encroaching on her property and shading her garage causing mold issues. The neighbor does not want to trim trees. Barr-Hamblin stated that the Tree Ordinance allows her to trim trees over her property line as long as it doesn't permanently damage trees. Shireman asked if the neighbors can blame her if trees were damaged. Glasbrenner stated that we couldn't give that kind of legal advice. Glasbrenner clarified that this is restatement of Common Law of Wisconsin.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

Review and Discuss City Tree Ordinance: Barr-Hamblin provided notes in packet on suggested changes. Barr-Hamblin stated that boulevard definition is a big concern as Right of Way can be much past the sidewalk. Fruit asked if there was a standard distance from road to sidewalk. Barr-Hamblin replied no and there is no standard for Right of Way. Glasbrenner stated that GIS mapping can be several feet off. We may want a budget item for lot line determination. Barr-Hamblin mentioned that there are some definitions that are incorrect in the Ordinance. Hazard tree definition is vague regarding what "damage to property" is. Glasbrenner mentioned that Standard Operating Procedures need to be developed for many of the ordinance items. Glasbrenner suggested reviewing whether we need to order people to cut dead trees that are not safety hazards. Downs asked if we offer city services to cut private trees. Barr-Hamblin stated we only cut private trees if homeowners don't cut hazard trees. Barr-Hamblin stated that the Ordinance requires licenses for too many minor landscaping activities. Cairns recommended that damage definition should be trees that could cause physical damage to another person's property and if they don't comply we need to be able to step in quickly. Barr-Hamblin suggested that a list regarding plant disease and species should be kept by Forester or department that is referenced in the ordinance so that the list can adapt to changes and additions in pests and pathogens and invasives. Glasbrenner suggested to bring the list through tree board for changes but it wouldn't require amending ordinance. Barr-Hamblin recommended that "Standard Arboricultural Procedures" should reference ANSI or another specific list. Glasbrenner stated that the nuisance on private land process is complicated, lengthy and inefficient. Glasbrenner questioned how involved the Tree Board should be in the ordinance review process. He suggested that the Forester and attorney bring suggestions to committee for ordinance changes. Barr-Hamblin asked the Board to review the Heritage Tree Program in Cottage Grove's ordinance as something we might want to consider as well as Development plans from Bellevue and Cottage Grove.

CITY FORESTER UPDATE

1. **Tree Cutting Update:** An Ash tree and a two Pines were removed from Lippert property project. They were boulevard trees. Jason Koch has updated on any trees and limbs the Street Department has

removed. Ron Fruit updated that a limb came down from Bohmann drive Oak tree. Barr-Hamblin stated that the tree is on the cut list, and she spoke with Scott Gald. He said the lift truck could get up there when ground is frozen so it will be winter project. Fruit stated that there are two dead Ashes on walking trail. Barr-Hamblin stated that they are on list, but she needs to research who they belong to.

2. **Tree Cutting List:** Barr-Hamblin reported that she did a drive through of city and made a list of Public and Private trees including citizen and utility concerns. Certified letters for private trees were not sent last year so we need to restart the process for any trees that were not removed. Barr-Hamblin suggested scheduling a hearing date for all private trees requiring cutting. Mayor Todd Coppernoll joined meeting. Barr-Hamblin stated that we may not need to send certified letters out, but we will still need to go through the process if we need to charge them to cut the tree. Glasbrenner stated that this may not be required by state statute and may be too burdensome, but we need to make sure we are giving adequate notice. For this year we will issue certified letters and do hearing. Barr-Hamblin reported that when city trees are going to get cut the homeowner gets a notice and a copy of the list will be sent to the mayor.
3. **Tree Planting Update:** Pat and Doug finished planting trees. Barr-Hamblin reported that the trees that were purchased were too big to put in boulevards, so they have been planted in parks. Next year the focus will be on boulevard trees. Glasbrenner reported that the new zoning administrator watches Digger's Hotline permits and has identified situations where people have applied to plant trees in areas where they need city permission. Glasbrenner stated that the current street project left trees that perhaps shouldn't have been left that may die. In the future a pre-construction walk through should be conducted to talk about trees that may be an issue. Barr-Hamblin reported a need to monitor all trees in construction area.
4. **Other Updates:** Robin's Nest tree situation was resolved. A Certified letter was sent, and a neighbor helped cut tree. The neighbor who had complained about the tree was satisfied. Barr-Hamblin reported having several contacts with the public regarding trees per week and that most are simple but the most challenging usually involve property line issues.

REPORTS, REQUESTS, FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Next Meeting Set for Wednesday, January 22nd 2025 5:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Downs. Fruit second. All in favor.