

Tree and Landscape 2024 January Minutes

Attendance			
Jessie Wagner	1	Ralph Weber	1
Gulizar Baggson	1	Jeannie McIntire	1
Ashley Harris	1	Mark Lankford	1
Nathan Lembke	1	Holly Hook	1
Geoffrey Braga	1	Emily Kroll	1
Taylor Allen	1	Shelli Kerr	1

I. Open Meeting

a. Welcome Members and Staff

- i. Meeting begun at 10:03, discussion of new staff and agenda.

b. November Minutes Approval

- i. Motion made by Gulizar Baggson, seconded by Jeannie McIntire. All in favor vote.

II. New Business

a. Officer Updates and Elections

- i. No new officer elections needed, clarification was provided that officers serve 2-year terms.

b. Tree Giveaway 2024

- i. Discussion regarding method of tree giveaway, particularly the idea of a pre-registry. Points were made: If there is no registration, this raises the possibility that there will be more congestion. Having the line 'snake' around and behind the building is raised to create a queue line for the cars. Traffic would be directed around the compost facility (location proposed to be set at compost facility to reduce confusion). Two lines proposed to move traffic from the streets, with no pre-registration there would be less potential for the process to slow and congest. Splitting the trees proposed so that there is half inventory on each side.
- ii. Discussion began about using the Municipal Complex, suggesting that it would run more smoothly on the day of, but that there are issues with the logistics of storing and shipping the trees. Fewer tree species will be available this year which should reduce confusion and logistic concerns. A priority should be made to ensure that the picture and health/planting information is accessible to the public, and that there is a system in place to distribute this information to those in line so that there will be less of a bottleneck at the loading location. Making sure that the lines are not on the street and obstructing traffic is a priority of this

program. Notecards with choices of trees is proposed, making sure that choices are ranked and disclaimers are made that no tree selection is absolute.

- iii. Question is raised about how we should confirm that recipients are actually in Bentonville – utility bill is proposed, driver's license is proposed. Driver's license would be the most accessible, though is not a perfect representation of the address accuracy, as some people reside outside of city limits but have a Bentonville mailing address. Suggestion that the person claiming the tree must be in person is made. Point is raised that secondary purpose of the address registration is to track locations of where the trees are requested and planted.
- iv. Suggestion was made to create a QR code with an address and email form as well as the tree species and requirements for care.
- v. Suggestion that we should line up a tree of each species at the entry so that people entering can conceptualize the size and look of each tree. Question raised about if there should be an alternate day for any poor weather, either the following weekend or the next day. If registration was opened again, would volunteers help with congestion?
- vi. Proposal made that in April we should use the old system, in October use the new system. No vote taken on this matter. Rule should be imposed that there should only be two trees per Bentonville registry confirmed but not voted on.
 - 1. Moving ahead with Compost Facility -- Nathan Lembke motions for a vote to keep it at the Compost Facility, Gulizar Baggson seconds. The vote will be made on a provisional basis, awaiting more information regarding the location and logistics. Motion passes unanimously. Ashley Harris is absentee.
 - 2. Moving ahead with no pre-registration – Nathan Lembke motions for approval, Mark Lankford seconds. Votes cast are all in approval, with Ralph Weber abstaining. Ashley is absentee.

c. Status Update on Free Tree Friday for 2024

- i. Question is raised if Free Tree Friday is a viable program for this year. Nathan Lembke asserts that it is viable, pending more information about the logistics of the tree shipping and distribution. Timing of the program is uncertain, as information about the program is still limited. The suggestion is made that the seedlings could be giveaways at the First Friday booth for T&L (First Friday typically starts in April, and a booth would need to be reserved).

d. Tree Preservation Update

- i. Tree Presentation update made by Shelli Kerr. Due to feedback by some of the Tree and Landscape members, the packet presented to the Planning Commission passed the Planning Committee but encountered delays on going to City Council, due to feedback from city attorneys and a council member.
- ii. Discussion in the Tree and Landscape Committee ensued around the potential inclusion of magnolia trees on the approved tree list, and if fruitless sweetgum needs to be specified on the approved tree list (as opposed to fruiting

sweetgum). Conversation was had that native trees should be prioritized on the approval list, but that since other non-native trees were already on the list, native status should not be a reason to decline inclusion for magnolias. The inclusion of fruitless sweetgum was agreed to on the grounds that it still provided resources to native wildlife, even though those resources were minimized without the fruit.

- iii. The question of a 'prohibited tree list' was brought up as an alternative to an 'approved tree list', and Shelli Kerr informed the committee that such a list already existed in the development code with the intent of prohibiting invasive species. This was clarified as being targeted toward developers rather than independent citizens planting their own trees. Enforcement of this 'prohibited tree list' was questioned and it was indicated that staff from Development Planning would be able to answer this question more comprehensively. Further discussion is required and will be tabled until the February meeting of Tree and Landscape.

e. Other Business

- i. Bylaws say that we meet on the fourth Thursday of the month, and the committee has been meeting on the third. Suggestion was made that the bylaws should be changed to reflect actual practice. Bylaws also make statements regarding location of meeting, make no mention of Zoom. Art 1.4 of the bylaws should be updated to refer to accurate staffing descriptions.
- ii. Next meeting there will be amendments made to the bylaws, pending approval by the Legal Department.

III. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn made by Ralph Weber, seconded by Ashley Harris. All in favor vote.
Adjourned at 11:26