

MINUTES
City of New Castle Tree Commission Meeting
December 1, 2014 -- 5:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: John Lloyd
Nancy Coning
Pam Patone
Erv Thatcher
Tom Truman

Also Present: Debbie Turner, Stenographer

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. It was announced that Gretchen Niedermayer has resigned due to health concerns.

Commissioner's Comments

There was lengthy discussion about tree work that has been voted on by this group, tree work to be done, funding for tree work, and the authority of the Tree Commission. Ms. Patone is uncomfortable with the Tree Commission's lack of authority when voting on tree work (removals, pruning). She thinks the group needs its own budget that it helped to develop and perhaps be able to raise monies to get the work done in a timely manner. She wondered if it is possible to delay voting on non-safety related items if no funding is available this fiscal year. She is troubled telling constituents the group has voted on something and being unable to give them a timeframe on the work, preferably in a fiscal year.

Mr. Lloyd believes it is important to identify necessary tree work and prioritize that work with safety at the forefront. It is also important to vote on work to be done, get necessary bids, and submit to the City Administrator for funding approval. Mr. Truman added the Tree Commission is spending some of its budget and getting some work done. At present this group does not receive adequate funding to maintain tree work. Previous funding came from the Trustees of the New Castle Common.

Old Business

Honey locust tree at the foot of Alexander Alley -- Russ Carlson has looked at the tree and will provide a report. Damage was reported at an earlier meeting (6/2/14 minutes).

25 The Strand -- Removal of a poorly pruned maple tree that is over the primary utility lines. The homeowners do not object to the tree's removal. Mr. Lloyd suggested planting 4-5 trees in the area after removal. MSC will look at work to be done and assist in any way possible.

Tree Removals: Proposed/Approved -- A summary of removals was reviewed by the group.

#26 -- 517 Cherry Street -- Maple tree to be re-evaluated in spring 2015.

#28 -- 6 The Strand -- Cherry tree about 20'-25' tall. Severe girdling root problem; poor structure; growing over the street rather than vertical. The tree has been broken and has a screw rod in it.

#29 -- 16-18 East 6th Street -- Two (2) cherry trees are in poor condition.

#31 -- Buttonwood (between Meehan and Lincoln) -- Gum tree near Buttonwood ditch and tulip tree near the basketball court are in poor condition.

#33 – 13 Victorian Court – Dropping large dead wood on shed. Mr. Lloyd suggests cutting dead wood out of the tree. *Priority*

#34 – 53 East 4th Street – Two (2) Hawthorne trees that looked bad late in the summer. Will re-evaluate in the spring 2015.

#35 – 915 Gray Street – Citizen request. Sycamore tree root interference with sidewalk. Mr. Lloyd suggested removing concrete and re-installing.

#36 – 531 Delaware Street – Sycamore tree declining for period of time. Re-evaluate on spring 2015.

#37 – 104 West 10th Street (on Clayton Street) – Removed a maple tree in poor condition at this location. Removed a large leader from another maple tree a couple of years back and the tree is not responding very well.

#38 – Buttonwood Avenue (across from 36-52 Buttonwood Avenue) – Five (5) box elders leaning towards the street. They are not good street trees.

#39 -- 551 South Mews Drive – Owners have been notified they have four (4) dead trees on their property. If the City removes the trees a bill will be issued to the homeowners.

#40 – 305 South Street (tennis courts) – The Trustees of the New Castle Common (TNCC) wants to remove six (6) pine trees. TNCC will pay for another planting. Mr. Lloyd prefers trees.

#41 -- 130 East 3rd Street – Ginko tree approved for removal at the 11/4/14 meeting.

#42 – 912 Clayton Street – Large Chinese elm tree needs some thinning, corrective pruning, and raising some of its branches.

#43 – 115 East 4th Street – MSC took a Bradford Pear tree down next to the cherry tree at this location. The cherry tree is in poor condition.

Ms. Patone reiterated her concern of voting without appropriate funding. Mr. Lloyd said the Tree Commission is responsible for the health of City trees. If we fail to identify problems we could be named in court proceedings. He supports voting on issues.

Mr. Thatcher believes the Tree Commission helps citizens to get things done. Much of the current work involves larger trees that haven't been maintained properly through the years.

Mr. Truman made a motion to approve #40. Mr. Thatcher seconded. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Lloyd made a motion to remove eight (8) trees he has prioritized on the tree removals list -- #28, #29, #30, #31, #37, #38, #39, and #43. Mr. Truman seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor and one abstaining (Patone).

Mr. Lloyd will obtain cost information for work approved tonight and submit to the City Administrator for approval. He thinks it is important for the Tree Commission to identify problem trees in the City and it is important for the City to take action on them.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the 11/3/14 minutes as distributed. Motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.