

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 2023 CITY OF PAPILLION TREE BOARD

Meeting location: 305 E. Lincoln Street at the Parks and Facilities Office

Chairman Jeff Perkins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Members present: Jeff Perkins, Tom Lundahl, Brian Houser, and Mike Neuzil and Advisor to the Board Parks and Facilities Director Tony Gowan. Absent was Mike Henton. Also in attendance were visitors John and Mary Beth Brandeau.

Chairman Perkins asked that the Board if not having already reviewed the minutes of the March 6, 2023 meeting, to take a few minutes to review. Motion made by Lundahl and seconded by Houser to accept the minutes as presented. All were in favor.

Perkins asked that Old Business be discussed. Gowan informed the Board that the city code is currently in review for areas to be updated. Gowan stated that the Tree Board duties be reviewed and discussed in the past with Mayor Black, City Administrator Amber Powers, and the Tree Board itself, recommendations were made for change, and are now being updated by Alan Thelen. Gowan reported that terms of service and length of service of the Board will not change, but that the Board is strictly an advisory board, not a legislative board, applying for grants, and administering the annual Arbor Day ceremony which is imperative for the city to retain its Tree City USA status. The Dutch Elm Disease category in city code is being recommended to stay in place, since we still have many Elm trees in the city. Gowan stated that the city code review will be introduced and approved on section by section.

Board Member Henton arrived.

Gowan wanted to update the Board that of the ten free trees that the Board planted last fall, 8 of the trees are living, with two expired. Gowan advised the Board that the NRD is aware of the poor quality of the trees and is taking steps to not have that happen again.

Perkins asked to discuss new business. Gowan informed the Board that the NRD and Reforest Nebraska is asking to plant 200 trees at the northern area trail at Prairie Queen Recreation area. A tree list was presented to the Board and were also informed that the planting group will be responsible for the care of the new

trees' through their first year. The city will not be funding this enterprise and all trees will be supplied by Papio Valley Nursery. Gowan is recommending that the Board approve the project. Neuzil and Lundahl asked about how they are going to be able to care for the trees in this amount? Gowan asked the Board that there needs to be a level of trust and oversight, to make sure that is indeed occurring. All trees are very good "Nebraska" trees. Houser asked about the Overcup Oak and what it is? Further research by Gowan will be conducted and supplied to the Board. Perkins asked about tree plantings and Gowan is allowing them to place the 200 trees in areas that have been shown in a diagram, with groupings and spacings done by Alan Weiss at Papio Valley and his expertise in the field of trees and shrubs. Gowan assured the Board that the "bagged tree" concept is one that he feels very confident in. Henton asked about the install date? Gowan said it would be this fall. Houser was very pleased with the bagged tree program and planting in the fall. Perkins asked about the size of the trees, and Gowan said all trees would be in the 1" to 1-5" in diameter. Gowan assured the Board that the maintenance aspect will have full reign of the park and water availability will be evident. Perkins asked for approval from the Board. All were in favor of the project.

Perkins asked about the Celebrate Trees Update. Gowan stated that indeed they did get the program moved to the fall planting season and that it may become an annual fall tree grant, instead of spring. Gowan presented the Board the tree planting diagram and varieties that will be planted over around the large playground area in Halleck Park. Gowan also stated that at this time, or in the near future, crabapples and pears will not be planted due to their high maintenance and poor quality "look". Trees being used in the area are two new varieties of Red Maples, an Elm tree, two Oaks, Bald Cypress, and River Birch. Also, the commemorative trees were discussed that will be planted in the Arboretum to further diversify the collection. The large English Oak that was planted many years ago for Jessica Dierks, over at the lake, has died. We will be spading in a large Swamp White Oak that we have in the Walnut Cree tree nursery. Perkins asked when that move would occur? Gowan stated that it will be October.

Perkins asked about families attending tree plantings in the commemorative tree program. Gowan stated that most families or donors do not request to be on hand when the tree is planted, but that they are informed after the tree is planted, and its exact location(s). Houser asked if we have Weeping White Spruce in the

Arboretum? Gowan said that we do not, and that he would like to try this variety in the Arboretum to diversify the collection of evergreens.

Perkins asked about the next agenda item regarding the Arboretum Update. Gowan gave an overview of the large project that would see the removal and replacement, with an 8-foot-wide concrete pathway system, along with new sitting (bench) areas. This would include a new extension of the path connecting over to Halleck Park Lake, along the south side of Lincoln Street. Houser asked about construction protections with the project? Would marking everything out would help limit the damage? Gowan was confident that with the various quotes we would receive, that there are companies that do large golf course cart path renovations that see them as skilled in limiting the damage that occurs with large concrete companies. Henton asked if they would then seed after removing the forms? Gowan said that would be part of the process. Perkins asked about the budget for the project and what it would include? Gowan said only concrete installation, new park benches (approximately 12) and a new drinking fountain for both humans and canines. Some of the benches are already being spoken for as commemoration. Neuzil asked about updating the tree identification posts at this time as well? Gowan said that this process will occur at that time too. Gowan stated that there is some interest in lighting the entire trail as well, but at this time, it is not budgeted. Perkins also asked that the addition of "QR codes" could be added to the nameplates so that the tree info could be accessed per mobile devices? Gowan said that this could be considered. Gowan also stated that the time frame may draw out when it can be started and completed due to the "strapped" nature of local contractors.

Houser asked about protecting the top of the posts with inexpensive caps to have it both protect the wood. Gowan stated that indeed we could do that within the finish of the posts to help with the overall look of the Arboretum. Gowan stated that the paths would be 8 foot wide to be able for users to walk abreast to each other, and that their snow removal equipment could easily get on the trails for removal. Gowan also stated that another Arboretum Arch, like the one in Veterans Park, will also be installed.

Neuzil asked about who is doing all the planting in all the new SID's around town and industrial area? Gowan did not have an answer for this question.

Gowan also stated that an additional Arboretum Arch will be place closer to Halleck Park Lake.

Gowan also stated that the Papio Bay Parking Lot will also be in next years budget, along with future parking enhancements through Halleck Park in the areas where the traffic parking is very busy. Houser asked if the Papio Bay parking area would be concrete? Gowan did not have the answer for that but would research and get him an answer.

Houser asked about the Ash tree removal at Papio Bay? Gowan stated that those trees were indeed being looked at for removal due to EAB damage and infestation, this would happen during renovations at Papio Bay set to occur next year.

Perkins asked for any further discussion items. Gowan informed the Board that when the large-scale tree planting occurs, in which the city will drill all the planting holes, the Tree Board will be informed.

Perkins asked for any further discussions, there being none, Perkins asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Houser, seconded by Perkins. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.