

**MUNICIPAL TREE BOARD
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
CONFERENCE ROOM, SILER ROAD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019, 11:30 AM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Municipal Tree Board was called to order by Katherine O'Brien, Chair, at 11:35 am, on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1142 Siler Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Katherine O'Brien, Chair
Tracy Neal
Pam Wolfe
Becky Touchett
Jacob Pedersen
John Formby

MEMBERS ABSENT

Nancy Varvil, Excused

OTHERS PRESENT

Richard Thompson, Parks Division Director
Victor Lucero, IMP Director
Mary Schruben
Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Neal, seconded by Mr. Pedersen, to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
JUNE 26, 2019**

Ms. Schruben said on page 3 planting should be planning.

Ms. Touchett said on the last page, number 6, 3rd paragraph it should be the subcommittee on Chapter 14.

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Neal, seconded by Ms. Touchett, to approve the minutes as amended.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Chair O'Brien said she thought the June meeting was really fruitful and we made headway. It taught her that we need to focus and make decisions at meetings.

A. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. LAND USE CODE, CHAPTER 14

Mr. Pedersen reported that he, Nancy and Mary met and we came up with a process. We worked on a plan for over the next several months of how to keep the Tree Board involved in the Chapter 14 update. What message do we want to take to Carol Johnson in Land Use. She is pretty organized. Let's have a discussion about what we want and think the Board should be involved in with the Land Use Code The subcommittee would like to meet with her and bring back information to the Tree Board.

It was stated that the Chair may want to bring that information or plan to PARC as well.

Mr. Thompson said right now PARC is in hiatuses. It is floating between official action and no action. The Chair is now coming to the meetings. We got clarification on a quorum. Mr. Munoz has asked him to take over as the staff liaison. He doesn't think PARC would object, but that does not stop you from discussing and deciding your level of participation. At some point you do need to carry this to PARC and get their backing. We are looking for new members for PARC. Also the Chair of the Tree Board will now be a voting member of PARC.

There was discussion about meeting with Ms. Johnson.

2. TREE INVENTORY INFORMATION FOR PARKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Pedersen said he and Becky have met twice since the last meeting. They reviewed the details of the system so he could get more familiar with it. We focused on process. One of the big take-a-ways was as a Tree Board we are to advise, but it is not our job to own the data. We are going to round up volunteers, but the management and ownership of the inventory needs to rest with the City. We want to maintain that goal. He understands that there are some issues with roles in the City and who can be the person who manages this.

Ms. Touchett said we can talk about the inventory all we want, but what happens to the information since that was the purpose of it.

Mr. Pedersen said we talked about the inventory and we decided this inventory is the basis of all these things the Council is asking for. Lets focus on the inventory. Who is familiar with Miller text book on urban forestry. It is a model for urban forest planning. Basically there are four questions. What do we have, what do we want and how do we get there and where are we going. As a Tree Board we could say if we had the information graphs on the age of our trees etc, then we could say this is what we want. Monitoring would come in with how are we doing. This is his understanding of the first step to create any plan.

Mr. Thompson said he proposed to John a long term process of designing a process to develop an Urban Forest Management Plan using the adaptive management plan. It is a model that does begin with benchmarks or baselines from which we march. John said we need something right now. We told him take down the damaged trees immediately, but we owe it to ourselves and our citizens to look at how we plant street trees. It seems simple. Take it down and plant another tree. Unless we start planting trees differently we will take that tree down again in seven years. He thinks it will work out, but now is the time.

Ms. Touchett said it sounds like what Council requested is a fairly quick and basic understanding of what trees need to be managed at this point in time.

Mr. Thompson said no one asked about the tree biology of pests. They asked what are we going to do with the trees downtown. That needs to be included in the baseline of the inventory. We started with removing five trees.

Chair O'Brien introduced Victor Lucero, who has returned to the Parks and Recreation Department as the IPM Manager. We are very glad to have him back.

Mr. Neal said it was extremely helpful when Victor kept us apprised of new pests that were popping up in the City and how to deal with them.

Ms. Touchett asked how were the 21 Locust trees determined.

Mr. Thompson said they had die back. We found them as we continually ride around the City and the parks.

Mr. Lucero said his observation on those trees is that they suffered from multiple disorders. They were exposed to the honey locust borer as well.

Chair O'Brien asked are we doing Las Acequias this weekend.

Ms. Touchett said we will have done three parks this year. Ashbaugh, Frank Ortiz and we are going to do Las Acequias next. It might take two or three sessions to do it. Different parks are in different states as to where the information is. Tree Plotter is the remedy to get everything in the same place. The shape files we have need to be moved over to Tree Plotter. That is a huge task. Before we take that on, is someone going to use the data.

Mr. Thompson said he counts 15 parks on the list as completed. We have 75 parks. That is 20%. We will run that acreage versus the total acreage for some sort of meaningful relationship.

Mr. Neal asked what are your criteria. What is enough data. What acreage and what percentage of parks do you need to create your report.

Mr. Thompson said he believes with this combined with the concern at City Hall he could get it into the geocortex as a Parks layer with an asset based system. We will go on from there with other asset collections. With the concern and the management plan, as skeletal as it is, he thinks it will be meaningful and the gravity of the sample will induce some concern and interest to hire professionals or consultants to take whatever data they inherit and do a management plan. In a City of this size they may contract their tree work. We contract removal and response. It is an unknown facing some resistance.

Mr. Pedersen said the other thing we talked about is putting together this sample and will that lead to a new agenda. So, in that spirit it is important to make sure we are doing this. Are we getting the it support we need to complete this task.

Ms. Touchett said we have no support from IT so we are doing this as an island. If your goal is to make this information part of an analysis to evaluate tree health we need to work with that. It could easily go the other way to create a shape file for everything you have and you can do whatever you want.

Mr. Neal said we are thinking the Board does not own the data and we are turning it over to the City for them to use.

Mr. Thompson said the IT Department does not care about data or what it says. They work on the mechanism software and making that work in concert with human work. GIS is part of the new Land Use mind set.

There was a discussion about the history of the tree inventory project and the commitment of the Parks Department and the previous Tree Board.

Mr. Pedersen said this Tree Board can change that.

Mr. Pedersen asked if the Parks Department has their own account.

Mr. Thompson said the City has one account.

Mr. Pedersen asked is the City responsible for allocating licenses.

Mr. Thompson said they monitor the individual licenses now and monitor how much traffic goes in an out and they extrapolate that to a desktop application to allocate it. We have two.

Mr. Pedersen said within your Division do you have control of a desktop with an ARC map on it.

Mr. Thompson said there is one here that does.

Ms. Touchett asked can the Division request a new seat on the software.

Mr. Thompson said we would have to get approval for that.

Mr. Pedersen asked so there is not a person in your Division that has it and an arborist to do that. It seems like that would be a goal for the future. Managing that inventory is key to managing the plan. It is reasonable that the Board push the inventory to justify that position. He strongly recommends that the Board be given information about the job description for any new positions so we can give feedback on the qualifications of that person.

Ms. Schruben talked about the Environmental Services Sustainability Plan.

Mr. Thompson said GIS is critical to any measurement. GIS is not a member of the team we have who focuses on the plan. We all have access to Leonard Padilla and he does produce maps. We are asking for graphic information. We are not drawing the maps. The inventory later on would be included. He much prefers data rather than graphics.

Mr. Thompson said we requested two workshops for the Tree Board. One was on budget and we never got to that workshop. He pulls job advertisements from all over

the country for vacancies. Anyone who wants to have input with that is welcome. There were a couple of changes in the budget process this year. They asked why did we not ask for things in the budget. That part may be altered this year. When a Division Director asks right now it needs to be discussed at a higher level.

Mr. Pedersen said there are very narrow descriptions for a certified arborist. We are talking about much improvement in the management of trees with that position. It seems we are limiting ourselves in defining it in that way. It should talk about urban forestry.

Mr. Neal said we have been talking about that.

Mr. Thompson said Land Use and Planning would be the place for an urban forester for long range planning. There is a disconnect now between the science and what people think.

Ms. Schruben said she thinks it belongs in Environmental Services. They are charged with monitoring and working on the Sustainability Plan.

Mr. Thompson said Environmental Services is in Utilities which is an Enterprise Fund that owns the money.

Mr. Pedersen said he feels like we need more information in order to have an opinion on that.

3. WEB PAGE

Ms. Wolfe said this subcommittee is comprised of she, John and Becky. We are going to meet in October. We would like today to get from Richard the technical parameters.

Mr. Thompson said for that information contact Carlos Sanchez or Henry Lucero in Parks.

Ms. Wolfe said the first think is what should be the website content. What do we want there.

Mr. Thompson said if you submit a PowerPoint those become pages on the web presence. You can do colors, graphics and animation and they make it happen.

Ms. Wolfe asked is there a way to get a web link that is not 27 lines long and to get it positioned somewhere.

Mr. Thompson said you have a budget. If you have a domain name and your own website we can support that. It would need approval from the City Manger and the Parks and Recreation Director. It would be housed in the Parks Department. Victor has a webpage and it would be like that, but under urban forestry and it will have links out of there to State and National and International resources as well as what is going on here.

Ms. Touchett asked if that is the direction we go, will there be an issue with getting the tree information out to the public. The issue we have is there is no one to take the data and maintain it.

Mr. Thompson said the City is more interested in trees now than ever. IT has solidified itself as controller of anything important in the City. There needs to be recognition at that level. We have made quite a bit of noise about GIS information. We are in position to assert our importance in their hierarchy of needs to get a pipeline in. There is a critical eye to what comes out.

Ms. Touchett asked can we update the geocortex.

Mr. Thompson said if they want a Park layer. Now that the Sustainability Plan and the Stormwater Plan have been established, urban forest is a term people are familiar with. People can talk about how important that is. The Subcommittee approach is starting to work. He would ask that you task the subcommittee with how to get GIS functioning for Parks.

Ms. Schruben said her feeling is that the GIS and ARC layers are becoming more important to many projects and that they will be unbundled by forces much greater than ourselves. You want the existing tree layer to go back into the whole ARC.

Ms. Touchett said and some way of maintaining it and keeping it up to date.

Ms. Wolfe asked which subcommittee is going to take that on.

Ms. Touchett said the website one.

Mr. Thompson said he thinks the web presence belongs in our office.

Mr. Formby said on the webpage we want a link that takes us to a map showing the inventory data.

Ms. Touchett said as we discuss content on our page that may be one item we want people to be able to access. We need to be sure it gets updated.

Mr. Formby said through State Forestry he has an on line account with story boards and other data. Are there any restrictions on housing the map on State

Forestay.

There was a discussion about restrictions.

6. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. DEVELOPMENT OF TREE MAINTENANCE PLAN

Chair O'Brien said we **need** feed back from Board members on being ready to develop a plan.

Mr. Neal asked is there a tree maintenance plan, how old is it and is being enacted.

Mr. Thompson said there is a document from 2007 that tasks the Parks Department with coming up with an Urban Forest Plan. He has never seen that plan. We are still in that mode. When we encounter straight shear wind events or a deep freeze and catastrophic failure of shade trees we call out a contractor to pick those trees up and we pay the claims. We have proposed, through the budget process and a multi-agency planning exercise, that we consider professional staff at a number of levels in the City and that we consider Forestry as a separate Division or Department and consider putting it elsewhere other than Parks and Recreation. In the last 75 days we have presented two options. It is a two year process of planning and grouping interested stakeholders and identifying objectives. Then from that formulate goals and pursue funding of the mechanisms that will deliver on those goals and we will build in a control function to measure how close we get to objectives by achieving sub goals. The second proposal is to take down the infested downtown trees and look at an alternative method of planting street trees in a hostile environment to lengthen the survival of the transplanted forest elements. Those are out for review now.

Mr. Pedersen said you asked John for consent to the process. We will continue the conversation and will get into the Land Use Code. His concern is to not miss the Land Use Update.

Mr. Neal asked why does the Parks Department surround all the trees with grassed areas rather than mulch areas so weed eaters don't get near the trees.

Mr. Thompson said in best management practices there would be herbicide used. When we mulch around trees without taking care of undesirable vegetation we are feeding the enemy. We have tried tree guards and digging wells away from the trunk of the trees, but we don't have manpower to do that in all the trees in the urban forest. We do mulch heavily and perform hand weeding when we are there with new transplants. We use the human interface for irrigation, then we turn them over to the irrigation system. We have a protocol that when a tree is transplanted we go back and visit the

tree at least ten times in the first month to make sure it is still healthy.

Ms. Touchett asked have you ever considered doing a small scale project where you take an area and do best practices with the trees and see how those trees compare to trees in different areas.

Mr. Thompson said we have talked about that in the face of climate change. We have been talking about doing turf plots at the golf course and tree planting there. The golf course is watered with affluent water which is higher in salinity so we are looking at where we could get other water for those plantings. We could look at the entire park system as an example. The data is already out there.

Chair O'Brien said she thinks that subject could be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Thompson said we will put that on the next agenda as an action item.

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Pedersen, seconded by Mr. Neal, that he and Ms. Schruben set us a meeting with the Land Use Director, Carol Johnson, as representatives of the Tree Board.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

MOTION A motion was made by Ms. Touchett, seconded by Mr. Pedersen, that she, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Pedersen meet with IT in order to discuss incorporation of the tree inventory data into the GIS system.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Thompson said ISA International will be in Albuquerque in 2020. They have asked for input as to if we want to have a State Convention as well as an International one. This Board should be instrumental in that.

Mr. Neal said Think Trees is meeting monthly at 4PM at the Extension Office in Albuquerque. He will send the information to Jessie for the Board.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Schruben said she is disappointed with the State of the City address as it did not include anything about trees. Tonight is the residential component of the

Stormwater Management Plan public meetings. She went to the commercial one yesterday. The biggest topic she thinks for tonight is the option of the City to increase or change the structure around stormwater rates. That is also a source of funding for more trees. It is tonight at 5:30 pm at the Convention Center.

Mr. Pedersen left the meeting and said he is unable to attend the next meeting.

**9. NEXT MEETING
AUGUST 21, 2019**

10. ADJOURN

There being no further business before the Board the meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Katherine O'Brien, Chair

Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer