

**SUMMARY OF ACTION  
MUNICIPAL TREE BOARD  
FRENCHY'S BARN, 2001 AGUA FRIA ST.  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019, 11:30 AM**

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**MUNICIPAL TREE BOARD  
FRENCHY'S BARN, 2001 AGUA FRIA ST.  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 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 11:30 am, on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at Frenchy's Barn, 2001 Agua Fria St., Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Katherine O'Brien, Chair  
Tracy Neal  
Pam Wolfe  
Becky Touchett  
Jacob Pedersen  
Nancy Varvil

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

John Formby

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Richard Thompson, Parks Division Director  
Victor Lucero, IMP Director  
Jesse Esparza, Parks Department  
Keely Jackson Kennemore  
Mary Schruben  
Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**VOTE** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 21, 2019**

Ms. Touchett said serving on the Library Subcommittee is Nancy, Tracy and Pam.

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

**VOTE** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. TREE INVENTORY PROJECT**

Ms. Touchett reported that they have finished with Ragle and Los Acequias. She sent to Richard the spreadsheets for everything in Tree Plotter and what was done prior to Tree Plotter. That has not all been entered into Tree Plotter yet. There are nine parks that were done by hand and are not in Tree Plotter yet. It is a lot of work to deal with different information tables. She waited to enter anything because the four of us, she, Richard, Victor and Jacob had a meeting about what to talk to IT about and that may take us down a different path. There are 1,876 trees counted overall and 15 parks are done.

Chair O'Brien said the Master Gardeners are in charge of the inventory at this point. Do you want input from the Tree Board as to what places to inventory next year.

Ms. Touchett said that would be great.

Chair O'Brien asked when will you have an organizational meeting.

Ms. Touchett said that has not been determined yet.

Chair O'Brien asked does anyone have an idea of certain areas to inventory.

Mr. Neal said it would help to see what we have done so far relating to City Councilor Districts.

Chair O'Brien said only one has been done in District 3 and that is Las Acequias. That is a relatively newer area. We have done 1, 2 and 4 for sure. Do we want to do SWAN.

Mr. Thompson said the usefulness of the survey at this point may lie in comparing a future survey to a baseline or benchmark. One of the things we were interested in originally was the river because the river is the holder of the largest percentage, by volume, of Siberian Elms. If we removed those what would happen to the other trees in the channel of the river. We know what happens when you take out

the unfair competition, but the numeric or graphic data is imperative to justify our presence in the river and the removal of invasive exotics.

Ms. Touchett said Keely was interested in getting her group out there to do that. I have given her a user ID so when they want to start that they can get into Tree Plotter.

Mr. Thompson said Parka del Rio is at several locations. Louis Montano Park and Alto Park.

Ms. Touchett said we capture only what is within the boundary of the park.

Mr. Thompson said this is a larger view discussion we are in now. Arroyos are open space and the responsibility of the Parks Department. The river channel is watched by the Watershed Division. They don't have any practical applications. His hankering is that we represent that actions taken by the Parks Department will change the nature of the urban forest. A specific reference is the reduction of invasive exotic species to allow natural species to do the job they were evolved to do.

Ms. Touchett asked would it be worth it Richard, if we wrote something up on the inventory for the Council.

Chair O'Brien said do the inventory and present the information from the inventory to the City Councilors. What can we do with our inventory this year to inspire some changes.

Ms. Touchett said if we want to get them interested present to them an analysis of the data. What are the condition of the trees in your District.

Chair O'Brien said Richard brought up Parka Del Rio because he wants more information on invasive species.

Mr. Thompson said he is asking for the river channel.

Ms. Kennemore said coordination on that would be great.

Mr. Thompson said he is not casting a character in this scenario. The Chair asked if any one had a hankering and he has a hankering for this information. A test plot would be great. A survey has to be significant.

Chair O'Brien said the information will help further the cause.

Ms. Schruben said she is thinking that because they are taking out the Guadalupe Street bridge it would be an opportunity to get some heavy equipment down into the river. The City has planted trees on the north side. As far as she can tell the City is responsible for that stretch. East of Don Gaspar is where the State land takes

over to Old Pecos Trail. There are Elms and Russian Olives in those two areas down in the river. There are two parks not done in that area.

Mr. Pedersen said he thinks to him it feels like we are trying to get the parks inventory done. It is a huge effort to ask volunteers to prioritize the river. It sounds like what you are looking for is a pre/post inventory in a site where you are planning to do some invasive removal. Do a presurvey as a one-off thing and use that as a case study for future work. Maybe put a group together to monitor how the local species respond.

Mr. Thompson said he agrees.

Ms. Touchett said she agrees. We could do it with Tree Plotter looking at a tree and marking it with your finger. You don't have to go down to the tree to do it necessarily.

Mr. Neal asked so you are talking about just a count inventory, not condition.

Mr. Thompson said there is more than one way to do an inventory.

Ms. Touchett said in this case you don't care about condition, do you.

Mr. Thompson said the objective is to convince the political base that we need to invest more in the urban forest. Maybe it is time to quit talking about what we should do and do something. Maybe we just do a tree stand delineation from optics. We have been trying for five years to get a budget for a tree crew to no avail. He believes the inventory of the river area could be a good tool, but it is not happening.

Ms. Touchett said there are two things, your hankering and the tree inventory. We can do the hankering in a small group. That is separate from the tree inventory and what parks we should pick. You just want an idea of what invasive species there are and numbers.

Mr. Thompson said it is a mixed forest with desirable species mixed in. The objective is to plot the growth and condition of the desirable species

Mr. Pedersen said we have methods for Tree Plotter for parks.

Ms. Kennemore said she has students that are reliable working with us. They like to get down into the river and could work on the test plot and can monitor the plot every Thursday during the school year.

Mr. Lucero said one of the key components to the IPM Ordinance is to establish a baseline of information on pest identification and monitor those pests. Perhaps if there is a workable sample size for sampling in the three different sections of the river it could be accomplishing the intent of the Ordinance and allowing volunteers to be

involved in a task and not get frustrated by going down an entire random section. It could be easily recorded with a staking system and monitor those over time and document it. It is a simple means to accomplish many different objectives including pest species and removal intent and to allow desirables to come forward. The New Mexico Department of Agriculture has a valid list of invasive species. Perhaps the Tree Board would determine which species should be along the river bed.

Chair O'Brien asked do you yourself have an area along the area that you see as a really good place for a sample plot.

Mr. Lucero said we could select three sites. You will find invasive species at any site. The river intersects with all the Council Districts except District 4. Pick one in each of the three Districts and do 10 meters by 3 meters as a sample size. They need to be safe and accessible sites.

Mr. Thompson said 3x10 seems short of a significant sample. Do you think a block.

Mr. Pedersen said we can talk about this.

Ms. Schruben asked does it make a difference in sampling if they have high or low human activity. Should one site be in more public view.

Ms. Touchett said this should go to a subcommittee.

**MOTION** A motion was made by Ms. Touchett, seconded by Mr. Pedersen, to set up a subcommittee to discuss the parameters for this test case.

**VOTE** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Chair O'Brien asked who would like to be on the subcommittee.

Victor Lucero, Pam Wolfe, Jacob Pedersen and Keely Jackson Kennemore volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Ms. Varvil said at the last meeting you said you were trying to find people who would use Tree Plotter all year around. She volunteered to call the Friends of Parks list. She understands that Tree Plotter also does online training. She has not gotten a list of the Friends yet. We need more volunteers to get more trees done and also identifiers.

Chair O'Brien said the reason why people want to participate in a tree inventory is more than just to gather data. It is also to learn the beauty and value of an urban forest. She will not support a hurry through inventory.

Ms. Touchett said Nancy's point is to gather people to go out and do this.

Ms. Varvil said if it is over in six years the data may not be useful.

Chair O'Brien said it is a revolving inventory.

Mr. Thompson said he and Nancy will talk.

Mr. Thompson said back to the six year cycle, we have not finished a six year cycle. It may be more valuable to key on the inventory we have already done. That is something to talk about.

Ms. Wolfe said it goes to the idea of a representative sample, not a census.

Mr. Neal said he agrees with that. He thinks a representative sample should include parks from every City Council District. That is why he would like to know what Districts have not been done.

Ms. Schruben said she had how much acreage we have done in each District.

Mr. Pedersen said put an action item on next months agenda to choose what parks to do next. That data would be helpful.

Ms. Schruben said District 2 only has two small parks. We have done two in District 2.

## **B. COMMUNICATION WITH CITY IT DIVISION**

Mr. Thompson said there has been no progress. He has been in communication with them. People are changing within in the ranks. Jacob encouraged him to get with Joshua, who is the Director of IT.

Mr. Pedersen asked would it make sense to get Mr. Munoz support to get to IT.

Mr. Thompson said he supports the inventory. He will enlist his aid.

Ms. Touchett said we got an email about Stephen somebody.

Mr. Thompson said they have taken departmentalize to the extreme. When we approached Josh initially he said this is exciting and we have not been able to reach him since then.

Ms. Touchett said so we are continuing to try to get Josh to take ownership of this.

Mr. Pedersen said we met and planned some actions. We agreed to attempt to have Richard set up a meeting and we would be there to give the pitch to them. We

don't have a home for it or the ability to do anything with it.

### **C. MAIN LIBRARY SAFETY ISSUE**

Ms. Wolfe said she took pictures and shared them with Richard. He said the scope of work was already done, it is a done deal and out to bid.

Mr. Thompson said there is no project manager for the sidewalk in front of the library so a contract will not be let. The clock will be reset. We identified some trees in distress downtown from Honey Locust infestation.

Mr. Lucero said there are trees in decline. He doesn't want to blame it all on pests. At the County facility there is a sizeable Honey Locust that is dead. The trees in that stretch are suffering the ill effects of grates at the base of the trunk. They are in distress and are a potential for hazards to pedestrians and vehicles and so forth.

Mr. Thompson said we presented to Land Use a request for removal of 8 trees and 13 more are coming. They asked about our replanting plan which is part of the permitting process. We asked for a longer conversation about how we treat trees in street planting. We were told the entire Land Use code is in review and we can address that at a later time. We are trying to find trees to put back in those conditions. That is the way the code is written. When we talked to her about the roots upheavals of the bricks she thought it was the pavers. It is an issue downtown regarding what to replant.

Ms. Wolfe said back to the original idea, which was that Tree Board may have something to contribute to the remediation of the sidewalk, is that reasonable or is this the general way the City is going to handle that problem. She sent to everyone a Tree Fund Webinar that the City of Seattle had worked on. This seems like something to address before we step in and say do this in front of the library.

Ms. Varvil said Jacob has experience in other cities.

Mr. Pedersen said this is a Land Use Code discussion.

### **D. LAND USE CODE REVIEW**

Mr. Pedersen said these are individual trees. You are going to have articles because a couple of trees died. Citizens are going to go to Council and say replace the canopy. This is all about individual trees. The way more important thing is how well are we jumping on that Land Use Code change. He attended workshop in Albuquerque. Jennifer Dann was there. People were there from other cities and states. They put together a crack team of landscape architects, surface water engineers, etc and they have monthly meetings. It is called the Arid LID Coalition. It is an informal group. The



stuff they are working on is model details. The point is that cities have a metabolism. Using that to the advantage of trees is much more important than cracking our heads over individual trees. We met ages ago and talked about meeting with Carol. We need to prioritize that now. We need to use the Board to agree on a set of talking points to bring to Carol so we can say the Tree Board met and discussed this at a meeting. We want to partner with you and lend our network to making sure the code update is good for trees. Stormwater is part and parcel with trees. We may partner with groups like that as we go forward to improve the Land Use Code and to amplify the message. Until we update the Land Use Code we are stuck with that and have to live with that. We need to focus on the big goal.

Ms. Schruben said under the Land Use Code there is something called innovative street design. We need to talk to Carol about how to do that. We should try to go for that for the replacement of trees downtown. It is worth a try as a demonstration. She agree with Jacob that Arid LID is one of the best in town. They have a fabulous website.

Mr. Neal asked how do we get to this section. Where do we find it.

Ms. Schruben said the only reference is a sentence that says developers can use an innovative street design.

Mr. Thompson said so we could propose your alternatives there.

Mr. Pedersen said the two things are confused. Some cities update their codes manually easily and other cities do not. Innovative street design, he thinks, is developer driven. It should be part of the code update. It is important to track. We need to meet with Carol first.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. ADOPT A PARK PROGRAM**

Chair O'Brien said she brought up this topic because she wants us to concentrate on what our mission is which is as an Advisory board. There are a lot of actions we want to take. Our primary purpose is as an Advisory Board and to work with existing organizations to get the actions we want done. Jesse Esparza will explain the program to us.

Ms. Esparza handed out an overview of the Adopt a Park program and reviewed it with the Board.

The handout is herewith attached to these minutes as Exhibit "1".

There was discussion about the program.

Chair O'Brien suggested that possibly the groups and individuals who adopt a park would also be interested in learning more about trees and we could do education sessions for them in that regard.

Ms. Touchett said she thinks we need to decide what the future is for the tree inventory using what we have to move forward. If our goal is to inventory 72 parks this process makes sense. If our goal is to get something identified that says these are issues we need to address then we don't have to worry about how many parks we do.

It was decided that the proposed education program as suggested by the Chair would not be something the Tree Board would take on.

## **B. TREE STEWARD PROGRAM**

Chair O'Brien said this program is functioning in several communities in New Mexico. Ms. Schruben has the information.

Ms. Schruben said the Urban Forest Council put together a Tree Stewards Program that has been started by the Extension Service in Rio Rancho. A form of it has been in use in Las Cruces for two years. Basically it is a curriculum and a training. They provide the training on site and classroom training and participants agree on work schedules and have someone to manage the program for specific areas or parks. She has been talking with Jennifer Dann and has three copies of a tentative curriculum that Jennifer put together. Some of it is not complete yet. They have reviewed the sections for training. The statewide curriculum is not definite yet. We could get a more in depth training from Jennifer Dann if you are interested in that. Albuquerque used it in some of their parks to train their staff. There are no results back from that yet. We are suitable for this program. There is some State funding available for it. The other thing that is happening is that she talked to LifeLink about their better way of hiring the homeless and using them to clear weeds. They are working on the Midtown Campus right now. They and their supervisor are learning about plants and weed growth and safety and tool use. It is a way to hire approved workers from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm and provide them breakfast and lunch. They get paid at end of every day. Currently they have more people wanting to work than places and times to work. They are hoping to expand to neighborhoods and businesses to hire them to come in once a month.

Ms. Schruben said she is hoping to hire them to help with work to be done at the park in her neighborhood. She approached Carol with the project. Katherine's point about getting the citizens to appreciate that weed maintenance and beautification and care of public spaces is really our responsibility, all together as a City. It is not just a job of the park crew. It is more than us just paying our taxes to get work done. She is hoping that part can be emphasized. She thinks we have enough expertise to up the

game and make it more meaningful for people. She can send out preliminary curriculum if you are interested.

Chair O'Brien said thank you for the presentation.

Ms. Touchett said she thinks this program is sound and useful, but she is not sure it falls under the umbrella of the Tree Board.

Mr. Neal said from what was said it sounds like the Tree Stewards Program is focused on trees which fits into what we do. He doesn't know if it should come through the Tree Board or the Parks Department, but he does think starting the Tree Steward Program would be helpful to the City because it has a different focus.

**7. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD**

None

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**9. NEXT MEETING  
OCTOBER 23, 2019**

**10. ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the Board the meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

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Katherine O'Brien, Chair



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Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer