ST. CHARLES SINCE 1834	**AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**	
	Title:	Tree Commission Minutes
	Presenter:	Richard Gallas

Please check appropriate box:

	Government Operations	X	Government Services 03.28.11
	Planning & Development		City Council
	Public Hearing		

Estimated Cost:	N/A	Budgeted:	YES		NO	

If NO, please explain how item will be funded:

Executive Summary:

A duty of the Tree Commission is to advise and consult with the Government Services Committee. January 2011 meeting minutes are attached.

Attachments: *(please list)*

Tree Commission Minutes – January 2011.

Recommendation / Suggested Action *(briefly explain)*:

For Your Information.

For office use only:	*Agenda Item Number: 2*b*

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
TREE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2011

Members Present: Chair. Jim Nau, Vice-Chair. Suzi Myers, Valerie Blaine, Pam Otto, Chris Scott, Phil Zavitz, Ron Ziegler

Members Absent:

Others Present: Ben Deutsch, Pat Konishi, Peter Suhr and Lisa O'Brien from the St. Charles Park District

1. Opening of Meeting
The meeting was convened by Chair. Jim Nau at 6:35 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Introductions of Visitors and Comments and Concerns

Omnibus Vote
4. Recommend approval of January 2011 Minutes

Motioned by Ron Ziegler, second by Phil Zavits to approve omnibus vote as amended.

Amend Section 6A Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), first paragraph, second to last sentence as follows: Delete entire sentence "For residents whose private trees are infested with EAB, the city is considering giving a discount on the purchase of a new tree." and replace with "The City is working with local tree vendors to establish a discounted rate that would be available to residents looking to replace and install an infected ash tree on private property."

Voice vote: Yeas: P. Zavits, R. Ziegler, J. Nau, V. Blaine, S. Myers; Nays: None; Absent: P. Otto, C. Scott - Motion carried.

5. Old Business

A. Commission Membership Requirements

In the past, it was determined that membership on the Commission should be open to residents residing within the St. Charles city limits or within the St. Charles Township.
Peter Suhr reported that there is no conflict in opening the membership to residents of the St. Charles Township. Peter Suhr indicated City employees not be considered as commissioners.

This is not a standard protocol of other City committees. It is preferred that no change be made in this regard.

Commissioner Ziegler questioned the commissioning process. He mentioned he was currently filling in for a previous commissioner whose term would expire in 2010, would he need to apply? Pat Konishi stated all commissioners are automatically reappointed at the end of their term, unless they notify the committee and/or mayor's office.

B. Langum Park Follow Up

Jim Nau presented. Lisa O'Brien from the St. Charles Park District indicated a teacher and a group of students would be available April 21 to assist in the restoration of Langum Park. This teacher has been working in conjunction with the Park District for several years conducting other restoration projects throughout the city. There are approximately 135 6th-grade students who would be available to work for approximately 3 hours and available to work from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Another alternative would be to split the students into two teams depending on the size of the site. Park District personnel would be on site to supervise as well as one adult-volunteer per every ten students to keep everyone on task. The park district has set this program as a community-school partnership initiative. Encouraging the stewardship process in children is something the park district would like to promote and encourage. While this type of program typically occurs for Earth Day, the Langum Park program could be one that the children return to every year, or semi-annually.

Peter Suhr feels there would not be an issue with a volunteer group assisting in the clean up process of Langum Park, but he would need to research this information further with the City's legal team. It is important to know what the students will do. He will need to know if they will be using tools, cutting or just dragging brush out; otherwise there could be liability concerns.

In previous restoration projects the students have used small handsaws and loppers. They typically snip smaller samplings of buckthorns, pull them out and pile them. Ms. O'Brien recommended the area be prepped: mark what is to be saved and path. The object would be for students to cut and pile the brush so it can be discarded. In the future it would be important to maintain the area with herbicide and cutting, otherwise the buckthorn will return even stronger.

The commissioners could design and place walking pathways to protect plantings. Plants may be trampled, but it probably would not destroy them.

Commissioner Myers mentioned that this effort would take a lot of pre-work and questioned the ability to manage 135 students at once even with adult volunteers. The area would need to be

clearly marked, the adults would need to know what they were doing, and they would also need to monitor the students.

Chair Nau suggested the Tree Commissioners be in attendance to direct the adult volunteers.

Commissioner Ziegler questioned the status of conducting a burn in this area. Ben Deutsch has not been able to coordinate with Dennis from the Park District. According to Mr. Deutsch the opportunity to conduct a "burn" would depend on this year's winter conditions and weather. Dennis has offered to guide the City during the "burning" of this area, but a burn alone will not remedy all the undergrowth/samplings that needs to be removed.

The Commission's goal for this project is to get Langum Woods back to a "natural area", by creating woodchip pathways through the woods for the community to enjoy. Eventually the upkeep would be up to the community or for the City to maintain. Peter Suhr indicated the City would need the commission to set goals and establish a plan in which this would be accomplished.

Lisa O'Brien suggested tagging the "keepers" and Commission Ziegler suggested marking the paths; it will then be easier for the adults and students to follow this as a guide.

Commissioner Scott indicated that a lot of this had been cleaned up years ago. At that time, many of the undesirable trees were removed on the south end of the area.

Chairman Nau recommended that the committee walk-thru the woods in March and with the assistance of Public Works locate where the paths need to be established.

Commissioner Myers recommends moving forward on a plan. Meetings should be initiated to begin the planning process; the plan will incorporate the student volunteers. A copy of the plat is available to the committee so they can begin designing a plan.

Commissioner Otto indicated that Delnor Woods could be used as a model, which has gone through a similar transformation over several years. After all these years, there is still a lot of work to be completed.

Chairman Nau recommended a follow up meeting with Ben Deutsch and Peter Suhr. At that meeting the group would formulate a plan, await approval from the City, and reconvene at the next Tree Commission meeting. At the March meeting, the committee will determine a date and time to meet at Langum Park. The committee will then evaluate the pathway design and any poison ivy concerns.

As for the students, they would be split into teams and given instructions ahead of time. The team would consist of one student having loppers; one with a small saw and the rest would be haulers. The students would rotate through the different tasks. Students should wear long sleeve shirts and pants.

Action items: Distribute a copy of the plat to all the commissioners for their review.
As a courtesy, Peter Suhr will present the event and goals to the City Council in March or April.

Chairman Nau read an article regarding the Farnsworth Mansion and the status of raising funds for the mansion.

B. New Commissioner

There are currently two positions open. Commissioner Myers is aware of someone interested, but was unable to make contact.

Anyone interested in the appointment would need to write a letter of interest to Mayor DeWitte.

C. City Forestry Plan/Ordinance

Public Works has provided the commission with several different urban forestry plans. Chairman Nau also spoke with Edith Makra for additional input, and she should be contacting Chairman Nau sometime this week. Chairman Nau requested that Co-Chair. Suzi Myers connect with Edith for the additional information so that the committee can move forward on the executive summary for Council.

6. New Business

A. Update on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Ben Deutsch presented. There were 30 new confirmations of EAB this past month. Similar to last year, Ben Deutsch anticipates seeing an increase in woodpecker activity in February. When the staff resumes trimming in the next few months, more trees will be identified. As trees are identified, they will be marked and tracked. Public Services will request the removal of more trees at the March Council meeting. There are two trees that have been attacked and the bark has turned white. Once the leaves begin to fall, we will begin to see more activity. Mr. Deutsch will also create a spring planting list. He anticipates the next two years to be the worst of the activity; any trees not being treated will eventually die. The City is actively looking for the disease on the city's parkway, but it will become more evident on trees located on private property. There are trees that have been confirmed, but are being treated. Those that are being treated with Safari

may look worse before they get better. Public Services has requested residents to report those trees being treated; Mr. Deutsch will not remove these trees giving them a chance to survive. The City is working with local tree vendors to establish a discounted rate that would be available to residents looking to replace and install an infected ash tree on private property. This information is not finalized.

B. EAB Grant

Presented by Ben Deutsch. The City applied for a grant of $20,000; if the money is awarded, it would be used to replant trees in the industrial park area probably during the fall planting season. In that area, 350 trees were removed and no more than 50 were replanted. The City's main focus is to use the resources available to replace residential trees. A response regarding the application should be received in February.

C. News and Concerns from Public Works

Presented by Ben Deutsch. Procedure for notifying residents when a parkway tree is scheduled for removal was discussed. The procedure was reviewed following the removal of a tree prior to resident notification. The procedure is:

1. Ben Deutsch to place door hanger at residence indicating the tree has been inspected and will be removed.
2. Instead of a sign in the ground near the tree, a sign will be attached to the subject tree indicating the tree is to be removed.
3. Residents will be mailed a written notification of the planned removal two weeks prior to scheduled removal date.

Ben Deutsch indicated that if the Commissioners had any other ideas or were made aware that the notifications were not handled in a proper manner to contact him.

Question raised by Commissioner Scott regarding the status of a resident's request to remove a walnut tree on 10th Ave. Ben Deutsch indicated that the issue was on hold until the Forestry Plan was completed. In addition, there are two other trees on the parkway of this property that should also be removed, a maple that is in poor condition and an ash tree infested with the EAB. This will leave only the walnut tree in the parkway. The tree is healthy; the resident's complaint was regarding the walnuts.

7. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Suzi Myers presented. All Commissioners received an email copy of *Emerald Ash Borer Fun*

Activity Guide from the University of Maryland that Ben Deutsch had received. Commissioner Myers suggested using it or a form of it for the children at the Arbor Day celebration. Ben Deutsch indicated he had a kit for Arbor Day that he would send to Commissioner Myers.

B. Publicity Committee

Jim Nau presented. A Publicity Chairman position is currently open and Chairman Nau asked for volunteers. After discussions regarding the responsibilities of the position and the methods and deadlines of disbursing information through the City and residents, Valerie Blaine accepted the position.

Public Services will provide the Tree Commission with a list of City publications and resources containing the intended audience and deadlines for each.

C. Arbor Day Committee

Presented by Jim Nau.

Activities agreed to by the Commission for the 2011 Arbor Day Celebration:

- Music
- Plants for each attendee
- Color Guard
- Tree activity
- Speaker
- Coloring event
- Photo Contest

Details:

- Rick Weals to provide music - Jim Nau will contact.
- Jim Nau will contact Midwest Groundcover regarding donating plants for participants.
- Color Guard - Phil Zavits and Chris Scott to arrange with the American Legion and the Boy Scouts.
- Chris Scott of Graff Tree to prepare a tree demonstration as he has done in past, such as climbing.
- Suggestions were made regarding a speaker. This would be a 10-minute presentation centered on trees. One suggestion was John Duer, former Director of the St. Charles Park District. Valerie Blaine and Pam Otto will research the possibility and coordinate. The alternative suggestion was that a presentation be made by Valerie Blaine regarding the importance of urban forestry especially the importance of trees to wildlife.
- Coloring Contest - Commissioner Otto will take a picture at Langum Woods, convert it into a black and white drawing to be used for the contest. The age limit is going to be 5th grade and under. Chairman Nau will edit the instructions to reflect this change. Distribution can be but is not limited to: the City website, libraries, after school

programs through the Park District such as Baker's Station, etc.

- Photo Contest - Open to 6th graders through adult, subject matter is trees including any part of tree such as leaves or bark. Jim Nau will research and prepare the instructions including method of submission and resolution required. Distribution may be, but is not limited to the City website and press releases to local newspapers.
- If no candidates for the Stewardship Award are identified, the plaque will not be presented this year.
- Suzi Myers suggested remembering Peter Grathoff at the 2011 Arbor Day celebration. Mr. Grathoff was a founding member of the Tree Commission and passed away during the summer of 2010. It was agreed that Suzi Myers would make a short presentation and also notify family members of the event. Peter Suhr will research requirements for planting the tree that is dedicated each year as a remembrance to Peter Grathoff with a plaque etc.

8. Communications

Electric Division/Tree Activity Reports

Motion by Chris, second by Suzi Myers to accept the November/December 2010 Communications-Electric Division/Tree Activity Report as presented.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None - Motion carried.

9. Comments

A. Commissioners

Suzi Myers indicated she felt the Arbor Day celebration plans looked very good. Phil Zavitz agreed.

Valerie Blaine proposed the Tree Commission consider addressing the value of snags.

B. Staff

None

10. Adjournment

Motion by Suzi Myers, second by Chris Scott to adjourn meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Voice vote: unanimous; Nays – None; Absent: None - Motion carried.