

TREE BOARD
June 26, 2017

The Tree Board of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in the Study Session Room on the 26th day of June 2017 at 4:00 P.M.

ITEM 1, being:

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Menzie and Members Fagin, Grisso, Guistozzi, Huffman, Janaway, Lavastida, Spain and Winegardner

Absent: Members Grisso, Guistozzi and Janaway

City Officials

Present: Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation
Karla Chapman, Administrative Technician IV

ITEM 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 26, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Member Winegardner made the motion and Member Huffman seconded to approve the minutes. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Fagin, Grisso, Guistozzi, Huffman, Janaway, Lavastida, Spain and Winegardner

NAY: None

ITEM 3, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Member Fagin made the motion and Member Spain seconded to approve the agenda. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Fagin, Grisso, Guistozzi, Huffman, Janaway, Lavastida, Spain and Winegardner

NAY: None

ITEM 4, being:

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Fagin said he will continue setting up a Tree Board booth at the 2nd Friday Art Walk. He said many people do not know that the City has a Tree Board and/or the role of the Tree Board. Member Spain said he briefly explains the role and invites citizens to attend the monthly meetings that are open to the public. He encouraged Members to assist him and use the event to not only distribute educational brochures, but to also gather public input regarding potential changes to Ordinance O-1112-19, Landscape Requirements.

ITEM 5, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO ORDINANCE
O-1112-19, CHAPTER 1, LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

Member Fagin said he has seen the state statute regarding trees and/or tree removal and wondered how much latitude the City has regarding the state statute. Members Huffman and Janaway said the City already exceeds more in the current ordinance.

Member Winegardner said he looked at tree ordinances from Ada, Oklahoma; Euless, Texas; Gainesville, Texas; and Wichita, Texas. He said Ada focused on making sure tree contractors were licensed in their city and he felt that was not the direction the Board was going. Euless, Texas provided a list of approved trees that can be planted at the street and said Norman already does that. Member Winegardner said Gainesville, Texas focused on historic trees and tree preservation and Chairman Menzie said he did not know if that is the trend the Board wants to pursue.

Member Janaway said he is interested in the history of the sweet gum trees that were planted along Berry Road. He felt the Board should go lightly with any potential change and/or addition to the existing ordinance. Member Janaway said the trees that are in older neighborhoods and under power lines are typically the trees that cause concerns and issues. He said in the past the Heritage Tree Program, operated through the Park Foundation, grew trees and gave them to citizens and felt the Board could begin a Re-Leaf Project to repopulate trees along Berry Road. Member Janaway said he felt 20 trees replanted along Berry Road from Lindsey Street to Robinson Street. He said the Board could put together an agreement for any citizen who wanted a tree planted and asked Member Spain to put a draft agreement together. Member Huffman said he can speak to the Norman Rotary Clubs regarding tree donations and the Boy Scout Troupes regarding digging holes/and or planting trees.

Members Guistozzi said she likes the re-leaf project idea and asked whether or not any member read about "intentional canopy development" in any of the ordinances reviewed. She felt like the Board has talked about the importance of tree canopies and wondered whether this topic should be a goal of the Board. Chairman Menzie said the Board could definitely educate citizens on the importance of a tree canopy; however, when a City Forester was on staff, it was their duty to determine where trees should be planted. He said the City Forester basically drove up and down streets in Norman and would contact a homeowner if he felt a tree was needed. If the citizen agreed, the City Forester would bring them a tree from the Heritage Tree Program and put a flag in the ground where the tree was to be planted. The Forester would plant an appropriate size tree that would not obstruct with overhead electrical lines, etc.

Member Guistozzi also felt it was important to restrict large trees from being cut down and wondered if the ordinance should include requirements to obtain a permit before removing a tree. Chairman Menzie said he researched several ordinances to include Pflugerville, Texas; Buffalo Gap, Texas; Colony, Texas; and Highland Village, Texas. He said the main take away from these particular ordinances was the mention of a City Forester and their responsibilities and roles in the care of trees, whether pruning, removal or replanting. Chairman Menzie said the ordinances stated that a City Forester would inspect and determine whether a tree should be removed and/or whether the citizen would need to obtain a permit before removal. He said the City of Norman has not had a City Forester since approximately 2010 or 2011, and asked if a similar requirement was to be added to the existing ordinance, would those tasks be the Staff's responsibility. Member Fagin asked if Staff would be able to accommodate and absorb tasks and Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said he does not have the Staff to take on these tasks at this time

Member Janaway asked whether a Forester would be needed to enforce these ordinance requirements and Staff said yes, possibly. Jud said if the Board chooses to identify historic trees; they could be identified by age, size, and/or certain species. He suggested the Board look for additional city ordinances that are in place and schedule a work session to discuss and review the criteria to determine the best ordinance and fit for Norman. Member Spain felt an ordinance should encourage citizens to replace trees that are removed rather than be an ordinance that restricts citizens from removing trees.

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Member Lavastida recommended a Heritage Tree Program, similar to Portland, Washington's program, and have forms available for citizens to nominate a heritage tree. Member Huffman asked whether the Tree Board could handle the forms/applications and Member Guistozzi felt the Committee could only make recommendations since the Tree Board is an advisory (only) board. Jud said Staff will check with Legal Staff.

Chairman Menzie requested the Board to read the ISA website, and the ISA guideline he distributed today. He said the Board needs to find a tree ordinance for a city similar in size to Norman, concentrating on street trees; focusing at volunteering to have trees (street and historic) designated by homeowners; and re-enforce replacement of trees that are removed.

ITEM 6, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Chairman Menzie said the Committee needed to have a sub-committee working on the potential changes or additions to the Ordinance O-1112-19. The Committee discussed and determined the sub-committee include: Will Spain, Chair; Don Menzie; and Darrell Janaway.

Will Spain said the sub-committee can have a workshop between now and the August 7th meeting. Jud reminded the Committee about group emailing five (5) or more members is considered a quorum and meeting.

ITEM 7, being:

ADJOURNMENT

Member Spain made the motion and Member Fagin seconded to adjourn. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Fagin, Grisso, Guistozzi, Huffman, Janaway, Lavastida, Spain and Winegardner

NAY: None

Passed and approved this _____ of _____ 2017

Don Menzie, Chairperson
