

RSTC Minutes for August 15th, 2019

Meeting called to order at 1805 hours by Mr. Kissinger, Jr.

1. Attendance:
 - a. Lester Kissinger, Jr. – City Arborist, Shade Tree Administrator
 - b. Robert Reimer – Member, Acting Chairman
 - c. David Moodhart – Member
 - d. Margaret Yevics – Member
 - e. Thomas Ryan – Member – **Absent**
 - f. Brian Twyman – City Council – **Absent**
 - g. Jeff Thompson – Support
 - h. John Denick – Support – **Absent**
 - i. Kyle Zeiber – Public Works Operations Manager
2. Presenters / Guests:
 - a. None
3. Review of the minutes from July, 2019
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Reimer, seconded by Ms. Yevics
 - i. All in favor. 3y, 0n
4. Report of permits
 - a. For July, 2019
 - i. Removals – 4
 - ii. Pruning – 3
 - iii. Planting – 0
5. Arborist Report
 - a. Classes Attended
 - i. Managing Invasive Plants, Held in Lehigh County, Macungie Fire Station Wet Lands
 - b. 0 – Notifications for hazards, pruning, or violations sent out to the property owners for the month of July
 - c. 9 – Notice of Violations issued for hazardous trees, vacant pits, etc.....
 - d. 3 – Adopt-a-Tree Agreement for Fall of 2019
 - e. 0 – Invoices to property owners for failure to comply
 - f. 7 – Invoices for In House work during July 2019 totaling \$6,657.50
 - g. 4 – Contractor Invoices for July 2019 totaling \$37,323.82 (Nolde Pines)
 - h. 0 – Letters of interest received for the Fall 2019 Adopt-a-Tree
6. Request for Variance in having to replant
 - a. None
7. Review of Zoning Plans
 - a. 450 S. 5th Street, Tree removal to accommodate an addition to the structure

- b. Humane Society of Berks, Tree removal to accommodate an addition / expansion
- c. 253 Reed Street, Trees to be added as part of a parking lot being installed
- d. Gateway Drive Lot #3, expansion project, trees to be added (review occurred in May)

8. Old Business

a. Ordinance:

- i. Mr. Kissinger states the ordinance is still with legal. He has received no response on the status and continues to work with Mr. Johnson to get this back.
 - 1. Remains Tabled
- ii. Draft Ordinance Review by the Commission handout in May
 - 1. Commission has asked for more time to review.
 - a. Tabled

b. Budget:

- i. Mr. Kissinger did a review of the budget until the end of July.

c. Memorial Tree for Mr. Slifko

- i. Mr. Kissinger states the PA One Call for design came back clear for utilities in the proposed location at N.3rd and Centre Ave triangle. He notes that Mr. Denick and a member of Centre Park will be working on the design phase together to present a draft plan.
 - 1. No additional comments on the matter at this time.
- ii. Mr. Kissinger will try and schedule both John Denick and Mike Lauter to attend the September meeting to provide an update.

d. 908 Rose St.

- i. Mr. Kissinger notes he received a 25 page Arbitration request about the appeal the commission ruled on. Copies were distributed previously.
- ii. Mr. Kissinger states after speaking with Linda Kelleher Council will not be taking action on the matter. Linda states the Commission should consider moving to the next step.
 - 1. A motion was made by Mr. Ryan, seconded by Ms. Yevics to advance the NOV's to Citation.
 - a. All in favor. 3Y, 0N
 - 2. Mr. Kissinger will issue citations and keep the Commission posted on the status moving forward.
 - a. Mr. Kissinger notes a Court Date has been set for September 17th, 2019 at 1400 hours

e. Arbor Day 2020

- i. Mr. Kissinger reminds everyone that Arbor Day 2020 will be the 35th Anniversary the City has been participating in the Tree City USA program. He asked the Commission begin thinking about what ideas they might have for this event.

- f. Park Assessments
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states the assessments are going well. He notes Nolde Pines has completed work at Brookline Playground, EJ Dives, Reading Iron, and Schlegel Park so far this year.
 - 1. Work being done at these parks includes removals, pruning, crown raising, etc.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states the contractor is currently working at 3rd & Spruce.
- g. Spotted Lanternfly
 - i. Mr. Kissinger is working to obtain banding material. He notes he reached out to Catch Master who states there vendors are Lowes and Home Depot.
 - 1. Mr. Kissinger continues to follow up with other vendors but has been unsuccessful.
 - a. Mr. Kissinger states he will try to have material for spring of 2020.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states the issue has not been as bad as last year. He states while evaluating Skyline Drive the nymphs are minimal to this time last year when evaluation were conducted. He notes that other have also expressed the same observations.
 - 1. No change in observation, still the same.
 - a. Ms. Yevics states the peak for adults should occur over the next couple of weeks.

9. New Business

- a. State EAB Treatment Reimbursement
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states he will seek reimbursement for the amount of \$4,324.69 for the EAB treatment program in 2019. He notes that the inter-governmental agreement has been renewed for the years 2019 thru 2021 and reminds everyone that this is a 50:50 match.
- b. Accepting Fall Adopt-a-Tree Applications
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states he currently has three agreements on file for the fall.
 - 1. He reminds everyone that he is still accepting applications.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states we will need to have a plan for volunteers if the property owners are not capable of planting.
 - 1. Mr. Thompson agrees and that further talks should occur about this.
 - a. Mr. Kissinger notes he has received an email about students looking for projects and will follow up on that lead and provide updates at a later meeting.
- c. Penn Street Pruning
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states that Cindy Castner spoke with the Mayor and he is onboard with this project.

1. Mr. Kissinger states there is a meeting later this month to talk about the project further and discuss the estimates that came back. He notes the lowest one received was for 21,000 (+/-) from Klahr Landscaping.
 - a. He reminds everyone that this came about after a meeting with Council President, Linda Kelleher, Cindy Castner, and Aaron Gantz about pruning along Penn Street. Mr. Kissinger notes the last time pruning along this stretch was completed was in 2015 from N. 2nd to N. 11th Street. Pruning only included raising of the canopies, clearing obstructed street lights and overhead traffic signals.
2. Mr. Kissinger states this project would include full pruning of all trees (approximately 151) to improve the astatic throughout the entire canopy to include crown raising, removal of all dead, dying, diseased, decayed wood, to improve the overall health and reduction off structures, etc.
 - a. He will provide an update next month on the status

d. Invasive Plants

- i. Mr. Kissinger explains the EAC has been talking about Invasive plants. He notes that the EAC is looking for input from the Commission on the matter. He states he has passed around the states list provided by DCNR.
 1. He ask that everyone take a look at it.
- ii. Mr. Kissinger suggest adopting this list instead of trying to create one. He asked if the Commission would support this or would they like to put their own together.
 1. Mr. Reimer agrees that adopting DCNR list would be a lot easier. Ms. Yevics states she agrees, DCNR does an excellent job in keeping the list up to date. Mr. Thompson notes that it should be made clear that we would encourage the removal of existing invasive and that we would recommend not planting them moving forward. He also states banning such plants is not the answer either but that residents should be educated on the species selection when the time comes. He suggest referring to our current Street Tree list when it comes to planting trees.
- iii. Mr. Kissinger asks, based off the conversation does the commission support adopting the current DCNR list.
 1. The commission states they are. They note they would like to make it clear that they support DCNR list but do not encourage enforcement at this time.
 - a. Mr. Kissinger asked for a motion to adopt the current list. Motion made by Ms. Yevics, seconded by Mr. Moodhart.
 - i. All in favor. 3Y, 0N

10. Information:

- a. Mr. Kissinger states he is continuously working to address the commission concerns. He notes he is making good progress when time allows / scheduling allows.
- b. Mr. Kissinger states he passed an email around about the Elm Tree located in City Park. He states this is just to keep everyone up to speed on what is going on. He notes currently we do not have to do anything but wanted everyone up to speed.
 - i. Ms. Yevics states very interesting read.

11. RSTC Observations / Concerns:

- a. None

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Yevics, seconded by Mr. Moodhart at 1915 hours.