

RSTC Minutes for February 18th, 2020

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. Donna Reed – City Council, **ABSENT**
 - g. Jeff Thompson – Support
 - h. John Denick – Support
 - i. Ken Roth – Support
 - j. Kyle Zeiber – Public Works Operations Manager
2. Presenters / Guests:
 - a. None
3. Review the minutes from January, 2020
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Yevics, seconded by Mr. Moodhart
 - i. All in favor. 3y, 0n
4. Report of permits
 - a. For January, 2020
 - i. Removals – 1
 - ii. Pruning –
 - iii. Planting – 0
5. Arborist Report
 - a. Classes Attended
 - i. None
 - ii. Did attend a Career Day presentation at Schuylkill Valley Elementary
 - b. 0 – Letters sent out to property owner during the month of January.
 - c. 1 – Notification of Violations for hazards, pruning, or violations sent out to the property owners for the month of January
 - i. (14) are in citation still since 2019
 - d. 0 – Adopt-a-Tree agreements for Spring of 2020
 - e. 0 – Invoices to property owners in January totaling \$0.00
 - f. 5 – Invoices for In House work during January totaling \$7,075.00
 - i. This work consisted of chipping Christmas Trees 4 times throughout the month and a Utility Pruning job at the over pass located at Railroad and Oley Street.
 - g. 0 – Contractor Invoices for January totaling \$0.00

- h. 1 – Letters of interest received for the Spring 2020 Adopt-a-Tree
 - i. Have not heard back from the property owner.
- 6. Request for Variance in having to replant
 - a. None
- 7. Review of Zoning Plans
 - a. None
- 8. Old Business
 - a. Ordinance:
 - i. Mr. Kissinger reports there has been some movement with this since the last meeting. He notes the Clerk's office took up interest. He states there were some additional changes suggested by the City Clerk which were made. He states it has since been sent back for their review and to be forwarded to legal.
 - 1. Remains Tabled awaiting a response
 - a. As of 2/18/2020 the City Clerk's office states it's still under review and will follow up.
 - ii. Draft Ordinance review by the Commission handout in May, 2019
 - 1. Commission has asked for more time to review.
 - a. Tabled
 - b. 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.
 - a. Mr. Denick states he has not heard back from Centre Park
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger will try and schedule both John Denick and Mike Lauter to attend a meeting to provide an update.
 - 1. Mr. Denick states he never heard back from anyone.
 - iii. Mr. Kissinger states there has been no new conversations about this as of the end of year. He notes he will look to re-visit early this year (2020).
 - 1. No new progress at this time.
 - c. 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
 - i. Court has been rescheduled till Nov due to request for continuance.
 - ii. Court date is set for November 26th at 2pm.
 3. Mr. Kissinger provides an update that two of the three citations were dropped. He notes the owner was found guilty on failure to comply with tree specifications in regards to proper planting. The owner was very vocal during the hearing and is now appealing to the Court of Common Plea. Mr. Kissinger states he will provide further updates as this continues to move forward.
 - a. Mr. Ryan asked if he hired an attorney. Mr. Kissinger states yes.
 - i. No new updates at this time.
- d. 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.
 1. Mr. Kissinger states Reading High is interested in holding the tree planting celebration in front of the High School. He notes he has meeting scheduled with the school on March 5th and will provide an update at next month meeting.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states he would definitely like to see 35 trees planted to coincide with the number of years receiving the designation as Tree City USA.
- e. Park Assessments
- i. Mr. Kissinger states the assessments are going well. He notes Nolde Pines has completed all the parks assigned in 2019. Those of which were Brookline Playground, EJ Dives, Reading Iron, Schlegel Park, 2nd & Oley, 3rd & Spruce, Front & Schiller, and 10th & South.
 1. Mr. Kissinger reminds everyone that the work done includes removals, pruning, crown raising, etc.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger reminds the commission that City Park and Neversink were completed in 2018. He states Centre Park was completed in 2015 and will be revisited in the future.
- f. State EAB Treatment Reimbursement
- i. Mr. Kissinger states he requested 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.
 1. Mr. Kissinger states the invoice has been submitted. He has not seen anything coming back yet.

g. Ash Tree Treatment update

- i. Mr. Kissinger states 76 sites will be evaluated this spring. He notes all trees will be re-measured and a list established to be placed out for bid.
- ii. Mr. Kissinger reminds everyone that the first round of treatments occurred in 2016 and wrapped up in 2018. He states the second round began in 2019 with an expected completion date of 2021.
- iii. Mr. Kissinger asked for support in switching to Tree-age R10. He states it's the same chemical formulation just not as thick. He notes it works 3x faster and will help save money.
 1. Mr. Reimer makes a motion to accept Mr. Kissinger recommendation. Mr. Moodhart seconds the motion.
 - a. All in favor 3Y, 0N

9. New Business

a. Budget:

- i. Mr. Kissinger reviewed the budget. He notes no significant changes since the beginning of the year. He states the only expenses have been salary and overtime.

b. Tree Plantings

- i. The Citizens Climate Control Lobby will continue partnering with the City and the Commission to continue planting trees throughout the community. Mr. Kissinger reminds everyone that they were very supportive during the fall plantings and even obtained students from Penn State Berks to assist in the plantings. He notes Penn State has interest in continuing to provide students with the opportunity to get involved with planting of trees as part of the volunteer hours.
- ii. Mr. Kissinger has been in contact with Citizens Climate Control Lobby and Penn State Berks. He notes he has secured 3 groups for students to perform plantings this spring. He states the involvement from the members would be greatly appreciated if their schedules permit.
 1. Mr. Kissinger states the students will perform plantings at Charles Evans Cemetery, and in City Park. He states the first group will be ready to start March 10th with the second group available March 17th wrapping up with the third group on March 21st.
 - a. He notes if any of the members would like to participate he would greatly appreciate the assistance.

c. Shade Tree Work Permit

- i. Mr. Kissinger states he has updated the Shade Tree Permit Application.
 1. He notes the revision is currently being passed around for review.
 2. Mr. Reimer makes a motion to support and publish the new permit application. Mr. Moodhart seconds the motion.
 - a. Mr. Roth suggests one correction. He states the pit size should be noted on the picture depicting proper planting. Mr. Kissinger states he can make that correction.
 3. All in favor to publish the permit with the above noted correction.
 - a. 3Y, 0N

- d. Spotted Lantern Fly
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states PDA has asked for consent for treatment for the following properties Pendora Park and Eglemans Park. He states the consents have been signed. PDA will work to identify all the Tree of Heaven. Trees to be killed will be marked in blue and treated, removals and chipping, and trees to remain as trap trees will be marked in red. He notes PDA will perform further surveying to determine efficacy of treatments and re-treatments in subsequent years if needed.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states Berks County Conservation District would like to partner with the City to coordinate some sort of educational program regarding SLF. Suggestion would be to have an informational program and demonstration to show SLF control.
 - 1. Mr. Kissinger states he has not heard back from the Conservation District and will update the commission when additional information becomes available.
- e. Downtown Tree Work
 - i. Mr. Kissinger briefs the commission on a conversation that occurred with the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce on continuing the efforts in performing tree work downtown. Mr. Kissinger states Aaron Gantz approached about continuing to partner and continuing the pruning efforts to address much needed concerns in the downtown district. He notes that Aaron states the Chamber has set aside \$20,000 over the next two years to assist in paying for this type of work. He notes the work could also include the planters along Penn Street.
 - ii. Mr. Kissinger states Aaron suggests working in the boundaries of Chestnut Street to Walnut Street and 3rd Street to 7th Street. Mr. Kissinger states he has agreed to triage the trees in this area and come up with a list of what will need to be done and how many trees total.
 - iii. Mr. Kissinger also notes that a discussion occurred about pruning and crown raising the entire length of 5th Street starting at Canal Street and working north to the City Line.
 - 1. He notes additional conversations will need to occur and that updates will be provided as he moves forward with these projects.

10. Information:

- a. Mr. Kissinger states he continuously works to address the commission concerns. He notes he is making good progress when scheduling allows.
- b. Next meeting is scheduled for March 16th, 2020

11. RSTC Observations / Concerns:

- a. 828 N. 5th Hazardous Tree
- b. Flag at the Canon gets stuck in the trees on a windy day
 - i. Mr. Kissinger states he will evaluate each site and address the concerns appropriately.

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Yevics, seconded by Mr. Reimer at 1930 hours