

MINUTES
September 7, 2017
BATAVIA TREE COMMISSION

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Commission and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

1. Meeting Called To Order

Chairman Scott Haines called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. at the City of Batavia Public Works Facility, located at 200 North Raddant Road in Batavia, Illinois.

Members Present: Commissioners Scott Haines, Gary Holm, Anna Bakker, Bob Lootens, Kevin Summers; and City Arborist Frank Saupp

Members Absent: Commissioners Kathy Vranek and Bob Burtch

Others Present: Kathy Montanari, Recording Secretary

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To accept the meeting minutes from October 13, 2016

Maker: Saupp

Second: Summers

Voice Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent

Minutes placed on file and to be sent to City Council for acceptance

3. Introduction of New Members

Bakker moved to the area about five years ago from Michigan. Her background is in fisheries and wildlife, and she has a Master's in Environmental Education.

4. Discussion: Phase 3 of Tree Survey

Haines stated that Phase 3 of the tree survey was completed in the spring. Of approximately 10,000 trees in Batavia, there are over 3,900 maples. The ash count was also very high before the invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer; originally at about 2,500 trees, there are now about 200-250 remaining. Prior to the year 2000, Batavia had only about 20 oaks and that number has risen to almost 1,000. Hackberries have gone from about 50 to 300, and Kentucky Coffeetree numbers have also increased substantially. Batavia has quite a few crabapples, especially in older areas due to overhead wires.

Holm asked if the remaining ash trees might survive, and it was Saupp's opinion that they would likely all succumb to the disease. Haines added that there are probably no green ash trees left. Many of the remaining parkway ash trees are being treated by the homeowners. He is starting to notice damage to white ash trees. Haines noted that the City has more than 300 hybrid elms now and they seem to be doing well. He has also added tuliptrees to the parkway tree program. Locusts are present in high numbers as they are able to survive in different conditions.

This past spring, Haines worked on removal of trees that were recommended for removal in the first two phases of the survey. The survey was conducted by Phil Graf for \$34,000.00 and work was phased over three years. It included two cemeteries along with City parkway trees. For trees that are recommended for removal, Haines does a reinspection to see if he concurs and, if so, notifies homeowners of the impending removal. Saupp commented that Haines is doing a good job and his efforts are paying off. Bakker asked how many parkway trees were planted as part of the 50/50 cost sharing program, and Haines said about one hundred. The City took over planting parkway trees around the Year 2000. A parkway tree fee is included in the building permit fee, and funds are put into escrow until the tree is planted. Most recently, trees have been planted in Barkei Farms and Tanglewood Unit 5. Availability has not been as plentiful over the past 3-4 years. The City is a member of the Suburban Tree Consortium which has about eight nurseries supplying trees.

5. Current Projects and Developments – Update

Haines reported that there is not a great deal of activity with new development. Holm commented that a new plan for Prairie Commons development on Kirk Road had been submitted. Holm also said that a plan may be resubmitted for the Landmeier Farm west of Sam's Club. Summers shared that a plan for six single-family homes on the former Spuhler Drive water tower site was under review.

6. Other

Commissioners discussed planting a memorial tree and installing a marker on Houston Street for the late Dr. William Whiteside, a former member of the Tree Commission. Members concurred that this should move forward.

Haines announced that the Tri-Cities joint meeting with Geneva and St. Charles would be hosted by Geneva this year on October 19. Details will be forthcoming. Saupp commented that he originally formed this idea with Pete Granoff. It became an annual rotating event and interestingly, Pete's son is now chairman of the St. Charles Tree Commission.

Haines reported he had begun a project this year to eliminate certain parkway plantings that block visibility for pedestrians and motorists. He is working on an ordinance revision that will limit the height of parkway plantings to 24" and prohibit woody stemmed plantings. Perhaps this might even be limited to a height of 12" near intersections and 24" elsewhere. Lootens asked if the current ordinance had any restrictions, and Haines said only as it related to trees. Saupp agreed that this should be pursued. Lootens asked if low branches over sidewalks could be pruned over the winter, and Haines said he prefers to prune trees during winter month. Pruning for stop sign visibility is done throughout the year.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Saupp and seconded by Summers to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 p.m. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.