

LIVINGSTON TREE BOARD

REGULAR MEETING March 18, 2021, ZOOM, SACAGAWEA GAZEBO

MINUTES

Attendance: Marshall Swearingen, Lisa Harreld, Andy Mitchell, Thomas Shands, Laurel Desnick, Rita Rozier, Susan Regele, Josh Bilboa, Dan Busch, Maureen Lighthiser

Approval of Minutes: Andy made a motion to approve the minutes from February 18, 2021. Maureen seconded. All in favor.

New Business:

- **Susan Regele and Rita Rozier from PCEC presented fundraiser opportunity** – Rita and Susan presented an idea for an awareness campaign and fundraising plan for a tree planting fund, education and volunteer opportunities. The fundraising would start in mid April. They would provide donation collection boxes at churches, stores, and business. Posters would be distributed. Collaborate with Park High and the Farm to School group. The theme “Make a Stand” would be to support the Livingston Tree Fund. The awareness program could be promoted through PCEC, ACE, YBCC, and other non-profit websites. Volunteers could be “The Shade Brigade.” Rita brought up the idea of having an ACE tree planting class. The Tree Board was enthused about all very good and creative ideas. Tom brought up a key question about what financial source the donations could be collected through. Would donations go to the City to be distributed by the Tree Board/ Parks Department budget or should the donations be funded through one of the local non profits? Andy recommended that donations be funded through a non profit so they would be easier to trace and keep track of, as opposed to being distributed through the City budget where they may not be accurately reflected and may end up in a general budget. We will look into it further. Another question was brought up about whether donations would go directly to tree planting or how we could incorporate tree post planting aftercare and maintenance into the equation. Dan said the City is replacing some trees that have been removed. Andy reminded that we need an updated tree inventory. Laurel said we need a 5 year plan updated and expressed interested in pursuing a legacy plan for long term municipal tree management. No decisions were made.
- **Emerald Ash Borer Plan presentation to the City Commission:** Extensive work has been completed on the EAB Plan by Marshall, Andy, Tom and others. Marshall provided the plan to Shannon for comment and feedback. The Plan is ready for the next steps. Marshall was planning to present the Plan to the City Commission. However, he was instructed by the city manager to send a letter of recommendation to the city manager

and then the city manager would take it from there. **Lisa made a motion to send the letter of recommendation to the commission per the city manager's instructions. Andy seconded. All in favor. The Tree Board will continue to monitor the progress of our recommendations and may request to present directly to the commission in the future.**

- **Tree budget:** Dan said the budget for tree management, planting, care, removal, etc. is \$8,000 per year. The City budget runs from July 1 – June 30. Marshall suggested maybe the Tree Board could make a request to the city that the budget remain at least remain at that level or be increased. Andy suggested the idea of a city tree district. Currently the budget is so limited, the city must very carefully triage which trees are most hazardous and in need of removal. Safety is critical with the aging municipal forest.
- **Josh Bilboa from MSU Extension** – Josh is the instructor for the MSU Master Gardiner program. He said participants are required to perform volunteer hours to complete the program. Josh is interested in placing his students with volunteer projects to help with pruning city trees. Laurel pointed out that volunteer hours are documented when they volunteer with the county so we might need to look into that. Marshall said he would check with the Parks and Trails committee to see how they handle volunteer programs.

Meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm. Next meeting April 15 at noon at the Sacagawea Gazebo.