

**LIVINGSTON TREE BOARD REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, October 20, 2022**  
**West Room, City-County Complex**

**Attendance**

Present:

Voting members: Sarah Ann Boyle, Elizabeth McNamee, Maira Emperley, Heidi Johnson, Tom Shands, Maureen Lighthizer

Non-voting: Dan Baker

Absent: Laurel Desnick, Melissa Nootz

**Approval of Minutes** of September 15, 2022 meeting.

Dan Baker requested a correction to the minutes of September 15, clarifying that there is, in fact, a line in the Public Works/Parks budget specifically for trees, and separate from funds for splash park, sprinklers, etc. This amount varies from year to year. Maureen made a motion to approve the corrected minutes, seconded by Sarah. All in favor.

**Old Business**

*Update from Public Works on tree inventory by Dan Baker, City Parks Foreman*

The new 2022 tree inventory is complete and has been forwarded to all members of the Tree Board who are the City administration's mailing list. The three newest members have not yet been added to that list, so it is premature to discuss the inventory. Maira volunteered to contact the City to ensure that the list is updated.

Approximately 3,000 trees were inventoried. Due to budget limitations, the inventory covers primarily the south side of Park Street. The report recommended the removal of 12 trees, which will cost approximately \$3,000-4,000 per tree.

The City has received grant funding of about \$14,000 from the Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association (MUCFA), part of the Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation. The City matched these funds. The City will likely apply for future funding for tree maintenance and removal.

The Board discussed tree-planting activity in 2022, including the Livingston Loves Trees (LLT) plantings (about 65), the City's (about 35), and the collaboration between HRDC and Educatio to plant several trees at the HRDC housing on the north side.

*Discussion of Informal Windshield Survey of trees around the city, to be completed, if possible, before leaves fall.*

Tom asked if we are still planning to do the survey. Sarah suggested we wait until next summer because the leaves have now fallen. Dan recommended not doing the survey because the

professional survey gathers more comprehensive data about each tree. He said that the City will likely apply for additional MUCFA funding for that survey.

Elizabeth asked for clarification about how the Tree Board can support City efforts to secure funding – whether it should make an official request or recommendation to the City Commission or staff, what the timing should be, and if the Board should also seek funding. There was a discussion of available funding and how the Board can work with the City to secure additional funding. Elizabeth mentioned the \$1.5 billion included in the Inflation Reduction Act for forestry to counter climate change. Approximately \$2 million could be available to Montana.

Tom made a motion to defer the survey until next summer and wait for the professional survey. Elizabeth seconded. All in favor.

### **New Business**

*Discussion of establishing a City tree district, which may require waiting until the new City Manager is in place.*

Tom is in favor of exploring this option, starting with researching how tree districts operate and are funded in other, similar cities. He will contact Tree Cities USA to see if they have information. Elizabeth mentioned possible challenges to getting taxpayer funding for a tree district, given the rise in property taxes and utilities and the current inflationary economy.

There followed a discussion of the process to hire the New City Manager. Dan described the process, was not sure if an offer had been made and, if so, if it has been accepted. He said that the vote must be unanimous.

*Discussion/decision of Joint meeting with Parks and Trails to discuss unified approach to Park St and Gateway overlay districts. Question: Who will represent the Tree Board at these meetings, or do we call a general meeting?*

The next meeting is October 26, at 6 p.m.. It is not clear if the meeting is also on Zoom. Elizabeth will attend. Tom and Heidi said they would attend if their schedules permitted.

Dan reported that he had heard that the LLT plantings were too deep. He inspected them and believes that they were planted properly. They discussed who is responsible for watering and caring for various trees on City property. About 15% of recently planted trees do not survive. He emphasized the importance of public participation in tree maintenance due to limitations of staff time.

### **Motion to adjourn**

Maira moved to adjourn, Sarah seconded. All approve.

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m. The next meeting will be November 17, 2022, 12 noon-1 pm, location to be announced.