

## LIVINGSTON TREE BOARD REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Community Room, City-County Complex

### Attendance

#### Present:

Voting members: Laurel Desnick, Sarah Ann Boyle, Tom Shands, Maira Emperley, Elizabeth McNamee (via phone)

Non-voting members: Dan Baker, Melissa Nootz

Non-members: Grant Gager, City Manager

#### Absent:

Voting members: Heidi Johnson, Maureen Lighthizer

### Approval of Minutes of November 17, 2022 meeting.

Sarah made a motion to approve, seconded by Laurel. All in favor.

### Old Business

*Review, approve new tree and shrub list. Request that it be added to the City website. Add information on wind effects from UM School of Forestry.*

Laurel brought up that the Ash tree is included in the list. It is susceptible to the emerald ash borer but it is proven to do well in our environment. Tom agreed it should stay on the list because it is a good tree for our environment, and the emerald ash borer has not yet been seen in Montana.

Tom requested adding Helena Maple, and Norway Maple. Discussion: maple trees tend to do well in town due to watering efforts, but the additional maples will not be added to the list at this time as it is a list of recommended trees, not required trees. The list should stick to trees with the best chance of survival here .

Melissa stated we should keep in mind that HOAs typically require trees in boulevards, and that water should be a consideration as well. A tree review could be included in discussions with HOAs about their CC&R. Grant stated we could include tree consideration into the review process for new planning agreements.

Laurel stated at a previous meeting's discussion, it wasn't clear who should pay for trees and their maintenance in boulevards. Grant stated that he would review Section 23 code with public works and legal to provide further guidance.

Tom made a motion to approve adding unsuitable trees, seconded by Sarah. All in favor.

*Review plans for joining with other Boards and Commissions to work on gateway overlay projects and Park Street. Decide on how to proceed with this.*

Melissa stated the gateway overlays are part of the planning board growth policy. Grant stated 2023 goals include implementation of the growth policy. The Gateways will be part of future discussions, which will have public hearings for comment. He expects movement on this in 2023.

Grant plans to reduce the work creation (creating the agenda, minutes, scheduling, etc.) of the city boards by standardizing processes with all of the boards.

*Review and approve the annual report*

Laurel asked if we should wait for board standardization changes to take place. Grant stated we should move forward with the report so we have a reference for 2022.

Discussion led to the following changes on the report:

- Separate the report to have one section focused on the tree board, and one section focused on tree board partnerships.
- Add Arbor Day
- Add board education (ex. Urban Tree Summit)

Sarah made a motion to approve, seconded by Tom. All approved.

### **New Business**

*Discuss options for maintenance of public trees, specifically boulevard trees.*

Dan stated the city is currently cutting down 14 hazard trees, and paying for it with a grant. This is a consequence of the last tree inventory. The city has an agreement with the homeowners that the city will water the new trees for 1 month, then it is the homeowners responsibility to water two times per week for the next two years. Future planning should consider water requirements.

Tom stated he is in favor of a tree district, with the city's approval. Grant stated as they go through the city's growth policy, they will see if a tree district is a good fit. Will consider tree maintenance as part of the growth policy, and will bring the conversation back to the board for best practice review and recommendations.

### **Report**

*Report from Commission Chair Melissa Nootz on recent discussions with City Manager Grant Gager about the future and direction of tree-related issues.*

This was covered while discussing the other agenda items.

**Public Comments:** None

**Board Comments:**

Tom stated that he notices some new subdivisions have two trees planted in front of each home, and that there is a variation in boulevard sizes, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Some boulevards are not suitable for planting trees. Grant stated this is part of the application review and site plan review processes, and will look into why there is a variance. The new planning director will be notified to be attentive to this.

Laurel stated the board would enjoy a conversation with the city arborist, and clarification on tree responsibility of boulevard trees.

Tom requested setting up a planning session with the arborists in January.

Tom asked if our board has a budget. Grant responded that the board does not have a budget due to the board's purpose being advisory versus implementation or operational.

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m. The next meeting will be January 19th, 12 noon -1 pm, location to be announced.