

CITY OF OLNEY TREE BOARD  
OLNEY CITY HALL  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020  
6:00 P.M.

AGENDA #1 “CALL TO ORDER” The meeting of the Tree Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 300 S. Whittle Ave., Olney, Illinois, with Todd Bettis presiding.

AGENDA #2 “ROLL CALL” The following Tree Board members were present: Todd Bettis, Amanda Thomann, Kelsie Sterchi, Jan McKinney, and Natalie Shryock. Chris Simpson was absent.

AGENDA #3 “APPROVE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 4, 2020” Mrs. Sterchi moved to approve the minutes of the Tree Board meeting on August 4, 2020, seconded by Mrs. McKinney. A majority affirmative voice vote was received.

AGENDA #5 “PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS” No one from the public was present.

AGENDA #6 “INTRODUCTION OF NEW TREE BOARD MEMBER” Since the last Tree Board meeting, Natalie Shryock had been appointed to the Board. Board members welcomed Ms. Shryock.

AGENDA #7 “DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: USE OF AMEREN’S RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE GRANT FUNDS” At the last Tree Board meeting, the Board took action to apply for Ameren’s Right Tree, Right Place Grant for the purpose of tree planting in Musgrove Park near the ball diamonds and for the purpose of tree care and supplies for the newly planted trees. It had also been briefly discussed about donating a few trees to local schools.

Since that time, Mrs. Sterchi had applied for the grant, and funds had been received in the amount of \$2,500.00. Mr. Bettis had also been researching the purchase of trees to be planted. The best scenario seemed to be through Wolke Nursery. With past tree purchases through grants, the Tree Board had sought ways to purchase trees at a discount, if possible. Wolke had agreed to allow the City to purchase trees at wholesale cost and would deliver. Because the City would be purchasing the trees, there would also be no sales tax.

Mr. Bettis had also been in contact with Park Department Supervisor Frank Bradley about what the Tree Board had been discussing so that everyone could be on the same page without causing any problems.

Overall, Mr. Bradley was on board with what Mr. Bettis had told him. Mr. Bradley did request that no trees be planted down the main alley that would impede on the ballfields themselves.

Mr. Bettis had plans to also discuss tree planting with RCES, RCMS, and/or RCHS, but had not yet gotten to have those discussions.

As far as trees to plant, Mr. Bettis suggested some hard and red maples and river birches. Flowering crabs could also be used for ornamental trees. Mr. Bettis then offered that oak trees

could also be an option. Because they were nut-bearing trees, the oaks would be good for the squirrels.

Mrs. Sterchi asked if Mr. Bradley was agreeable to oak trees given possible mowing concerns. Mr. Bettis replied that Mr. Bradley was agreeable, but suggested that oaks not be planted around the diamonds themselves.

Mr. Bettis then told the Board that black gum trees would also provide nice shade, but may not be as desirable. Mrs. Sterchi and Ms. Shryock were not in favor of black gum trees.

Mrs. McKinney recalled seeing gator bags around newly planted trees in the City Park. She asked about their use. Mr. Bettis indicated the bags were used as tree care. They helped provide appropriate watering solutions for trees that needed to be established.

Mrs. Sterchi wondered who would plant the proposed 40 to 50 new trees. Mr. Bettis recommended that the tree planting could be opened up to the community as a volunteer opportunity. The Tree Board could also help.

Ms. Shryock asked who would be in charge of maintenance of the new trees. If any trees were planted at the schools, the schools would be in charge of maintenance. For trees planted at Musgrove Park, Mr. Bettis felt that the Board would want the Park Department to handle the maintenance because they had the best resources.

Mr. Bettis then described the layout of the ballfields. The Board discussed the amount of trees that could be planted along the concrete "alleys." Mrs. Thomann cautioned that the alleys were used for tent space during ball tournaments. Ms. Shryock recommended planting some on the west side of the major and minor diamonds to help block the sun.

Regarding any potential tree planting at the schools, Mr. Bettis had been thinking about planting trees such as red oaks in memory of "the school year that ended too soon." The 2019/2020 school year ended quickly for all students, but students being promoted really lost out on a monumental year. The Board was in consensus that would be a great idea.

Mrs. Thomann had spoken to her husband who was the Principal of RCHS. She had asked him if the architects for the new school design had incorporated any tree plans. Mr. Thomann had replied that there were no plans for tree planting, though several trees had been removed. Mrs. Thomann pointed out that planting a tree or trees at RCHS upon completion of the construction project would likely be well-received, and the public would always remember how old the trees were in that case.

Mr. Bettis would come up with a draft tree order and send it to Mrs. Sterchi. From there, Mrs. Sterchi could send it to necessary parties for approval. The Board then discussed a tentative tree planting date of November 7, 2020.

AGENDA #8 "GENERAL DISCUSSION" Mrs. Sterchi told the Board that earlier in the day, the City Treasurer had informed her that a little over \$500.00 remained in the account for the Tree I.D. Park. She wondered if the Board had any recommendations for how the Park Department could

expend those funds. Mr. Bettis suggested that money could be spent on more mulch for the trees in the Tree I.D. Park in order to broaden the mulch circumference. This would help prevent mowing damage.

In past discussions, Mrs. Sterchi recalled that the Board had talked about some trees in the Tree I.D. Park that had been struggling and would likely not ever do well due to the lowness of the area. She wondered if those trees could be planted in large planters to help their survival. Mr. Bettis was unsure, but felt it would be tough for when the tree matured and further problems could arise. He would research this option further.

AGENDA #9 “SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE” The next meeting of the Tree Board was scheduled for October 29, 2020.

AGENDA #10 “ADJOURN” Mrs. Sterchi moved to adjourn the Tree Board meeting, seconded by Ms. Shryock. A majority affirmative voice vote was received. The Tree Board meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Kelsie J. Sterchi  
City Clerk