

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, June 8, 2022
At 7:30 P.M.**

The Chairman, Ward 3 Councilman Anthony Moore, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Alex Boccabella; John Schwartz; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Anthony Moore, Chairman; Certified Arborist Richard Varga (Non-Voting Member)

ABSENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Shannon Laurenzi

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Schwartz to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, May 11, 2022, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Mr. Schwartz, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Mr. Moore, "yes".

The vote was 5 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

ARBOR DAY (Saturday, November 5, 2022)

a. Update on the Seedlings That will be Ordered as Handouts – Mr. Traxler

Mr. Traxler stated that they ran into a problem with the seedlings. We can get them but they would be delivered at the very end of October and weather makes a big impact on the seedlings. They had some other ideas and Mr. Varga may want to discuss those as an alternative to the seedlings.

Mr. Varga said that he frequents many other nurseries in Painesville that have seedlings so he was going to approach them also and see what they have available for our handouts for seedlings. He said that he was going to work with Mr. Traxler on that.

Mr. Traxler said, and they also want to look at cost. The problem is once the seedlings are started in the spring, they get pretty large and at the place where he used to buy them, they were like \$30 for a tree. But what Mr. Varga is saying is that the wholesale nurseries start them in smaller containers and we will probably be able to get a discount. Mr. Schwartz asked if we are talking bare root seedlings and Mr. Traxler, said, yes, if it is a wet fall you cannot really dig the trees.

Mr. Varga stated, but there are a lot of nurseries that have them in small pots and they might have 36 to a flat and they might be 10 to 12 inches tall so he and Mr. Traxler will find out what they are going to have available and what the prices are. Mr. Moore asked if we have an idea on how many seedlings we want to hand out? Mr. Varga said that he was thinking that 100 should be a minimum. He is just throwing a number out there right now because this is our first Arbor Day and we really do not know. He will know more at the next meeting and we can discuss the number of people we think will attend and come up with a number of seedlings at that time. Mr. Moore said we would like to have everyone have a tree and if we have a dozen or so left over, he was sure we could find a place to plant

them. Mr. Varga said, yes, we can plant them throughout the City; there are many areas with places to plant them so that would not be an issue if we had extra ones. Someone noted that estimating the attendance for their first Arbor Day is one of the challenges that they have as they try to plan the event.

Mr. Varga said that hopefully we are going to promote Arbor Day. The good thing is that we have the website and the other thing is that it will be promoted in the newsletter. He talked to the editors and they said they are definitely going to leave space in the newsletter for the Tree Commission to promote that. Mr. Moore stated that a couple Council members have Facebook pages and could promote it on Facebook social media.

Someone asked if it was also something that we could get on the School's website; you would think that Arbor Day would be something that parents would really like their kids to attend. Mr. Varga and Mr. Smith added that it also could be promoted to all the clubs in Avon such as the Lions Club, the Leo's Club, the Scouts, 4-H, etc. Mr. Varga said that once we find out specifically what trees that we can procure, then we can tell the residents they would be getting a free tree and even name the tree if we had something a little special that we could really promote. We could even designate a new "official" City of Avon tree such as a native tree that has a burgundy leaf on it so it goes with the colors of Avon. We could start something like that as a Tree Commission.

Mr. Schwartz said just to circle back to the trees to give away, even if we can get only 75 seedlings, he still thinks that would be great to promote, to say to the residents, a free 10" to 12" tree will be given to the first 75 folks that come to Arbor Day. So maybe that way we can shoot a little bit low for this first year.

b. Discussion of Activity Assignments for Commission Members – Mr. Varga

Mr. Varga stated that he made a proposal for activities for Arbor Day to just get them starting to think about things and he gave copies to everyone. He referred to the first activity of "Hunt" and said that Ms. Laurenzi came up with this idea because she saw it at an Arbor Day event in TN where the kids would hunt and find a tree and identify it and get a prize. He said he and Mr. Traxler were talking about this and thought we could put numbers on the trees in the History Walk area and if the kids identify them properly, they would get a prize. They thought that would be something the kids would be excited about, finding the tree and looking for the acorns or the leaf to identify it. Mr. Varga said that there are a lot of different ways we can do this; we are just brainstorming now. Mr. Smith said, yes, we have to get the kids involved, and the parents as well.

Mr. Varga said that one of the things he was thinking about under the educational activities was to take people back into the History Walk area and show them the trees and all the identifications on the plaques. Mr. Smith added that it is a small area but there are a lot of species of trees back there.

Mr. Varga said that the next item on the proposal is the tree planting. Obviously we are going to have a tree planting as part of the Arbor Day event and he has to find out specifically where the Parks Department wants to plant a tree and we will just choose a species. Mr. Smith stated that during the Landmarks Preservation Commission meeting which was held just before the Tree Commission meeting tonight, Clint Gault was talking about the Christmas tree lighting ceremony and he wants to get a permanent Christmas tree planted for that. That would be great to plant it at our Arbor Day also and Mr. Gault wants to meet with us to discuss that. Mr. Moore said it would be really nice to have the Tree Commission involved with the Christmas tree lighting each year, and anchor something that the

community can come and see each year. So he will meet with Mr. Gault and Mr. Smith and maybe the Mayor.

Mr. Varga said that they would all work together on this; he would contact Recreation Coordinator Clare Harasimchuk and figure out the most appropriate place for the tree as far as electricity is concerned and how we are going to access it in the future, etc. Mr. Smith stated that he thought that Mr. Gault's idea for a community Christmas tree is wonderful and it can stay lit up the whole Christmas season. He asked Mr. Varga how tall a tree we would want to put in for that to make it viable and Mr. Varga said he thought that we want to start out with at least a 7 or 8-footer just so it can be decorated and lit up. Anything over that and you would need a backhoe because it starts to weigh over 400 lbs with the root ball but if you stay around 7 or 8 ft, it is more manageable as far as planting.

Mr. Varga said, and then the next part listed on the proposal is the education and it is great because there are trees over there at the Aquatic Center that have never been pruned and so we are going to do pruning demonstrations and when we plant the tree, we can talk about watering and mulching. He and Mr. Traxler will take care of coordinating those three things. Mr. Varga added, and Mr. Schwartz said that he could get educational information from the Soil and Water Conservation District to bring to Arbor Day and we could set up a little table with that educational material. Mr. Schwartz said, yes, we have a couple different options with that; he can either get the material or he can invite someone from the District to come and be at a booth to talk to people. Also, if we are talking woodland critters, we can even call Randy White, the Game Warden here in the County, and have him come out so the kiddos would have something else they could stop and take a look at. So we might have a couple booths, enough to kind of keep people entertained

Mr. Varga said those are great ideas. He then asked Mr. Smith to talk about the possibility of a beer tent. Mr. Smith said that he could either go to the Avon Brewing Company or the Railroad Brewing Company here in Avon and ask them to donate at least one keg of beer and the tap fee. He could sell the beer really cheap at say, \$2.00 for a 12 oz glass so people will buy it and we would take all the money and give it to a charity. He said that Mr. Varga told him that the teenage group of the Lions Club, the Leo's, helped plant milkweed at the Cahoon House and Mr. Smith thought a way to reward them is to give them the profits of the beer sale. Then every year we could donate the money to a different youth group. We would have a sign in the beer tent saying 100% of the beer sales go to whatever group, and sell it cheap enough so it will get sold. He asked if we need to buy a keg, can we use our Tree Commission money to buy it? Mr. Moore said he would check with Finance Director Bill Logan on that. Mr. Smith said that he would try the donation route first. Someone asked about needing to have a liquor permit and Mr. Moore said that they would have to find out about that.

Mr. Varga stated that another thing we have to think about is that, Arbor Day being in November, it could be chilly and we might need to rent heaters. Mr. Boccabella said that there are patio heaters and tent heaters to be had. It's the time of year where you roll the dice; it could be 50 degrees and sunny or it could be 39 degrees with sleety rain. Mr. Varga said, so this is going to be a learning curve; maybe next year we would have Arbor Day earlier in the year. The reason he started with this in November was because Ms. Harasimchuk felt that would be the best day as all the Avon activities would have been completed as far as soccer and all the events. Mr. Smith said, yes, you do not want to have an event while soccer is going on with our little kids. He said that he hikes at Schwartz Road Park all the time and when it is soccer season, which goes into the fall, there are just hundreds of kids involved so you do not want to compete with that. So if we have to stay with the first week in November for Arbor Day, as long as we have a tent for shelter, we can go from there. We do not want to compete with the athletic groups.

Mr. Moore said that they would have to get a permit to do a beer tent as he just checked it; maybe \$200 at most. Mr. Varga said, and the other thing we would like to have is a food truck so somebody has to look into that also. Also, he wanted to run by everybody the idea of entertainment. He thought about involving the High School as they have these small ensembles that like to go out and play at places. If we get the High School involved, that would bring another Avon entity into the activity level.

Mr. Smith said that was a great idea and he added that last September there was a 70's decade high school reunion at Crusher Stadium and the Avon High School electric orchestra played and he was just amazed at these kids. There were at least 20 or 25 of them and they played for a long time and it was awesome. That would be the group to have at Arbor Day. He will go to the High School and ask the Band Director if they would be interested in that.

Mr. Varga noted that he, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Smith are going to the Tree Awards Conference tomorrow in Richfield and supposedly all the urban foresters are going to be there. They will hear some ideas about Arbor Day from these people and also see if we are on track for being Tree City USA. He thinks we are very much on track but he just wants to reconfirm that with our urban forester and see if we need to be doing anything else to keep on track. He said that they will report back at our next Tree Commission meeting on July 13th.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Schwartz stated that, going back to the Arbor Day activities, we talked to Lorain County Metroparks a bit, and it would be nice to have small activities for ages 5 -9 or something like that. Mr. Varga said he forgot to mention that they stopped and talked to the Director at the Miller Nature Preserve and gave her this list of proposed activities and asked her to look at it. She said that they want to get involved so he will check back with her in a couple weeks.

Mr. Schwartz said that his other comment is on the education, the pruning, mulching, and watering, and doing the demonstrations. Who is our audience for that? Is that just for landowners or are we going to reach out to local landscaping companies to see if they want to have their guys see it? Mr. Varga said, as the Avon Tree Commission, he thought we are going to focus just on our residents and educating the residents.

Mr. Moore stated that he will be out of town on July 13th, the date of the next Tree Commission meeting, and he asked if anybody would be averse to changing the date if it can be done. After a short discussion, it was agreed upon the date of July 20th for the next meeting. Mr. Moore said that he would check with the Clerk of Council to see if this is possible.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Schwartz to adjourn the meeting of the Avon Tree Commission, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Mr. Schwartz, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Mr. Moore, "yes".

The vote was 5 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council