

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Caucus Room of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, July 20, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Shannon Laurenzi, Chair of the meeting.

Present:

Members of the Avon Tree Commission: Shannon Laurenzi, Matt Smith, Tony Moore, Alex Boccabella, Mary Berges

Certified Arborist Rick Varga - Non-Voting Member of the Avon Tree Commission

Discussion of Arbor Day Activities

Ms. Laurenzi stated that she gave everyone a proposed agenda for Arbor Day that they can begin to finalize in the next two weeks. She asked for confirmation that Arbor Day is scheduled from Noon to 3:00 P.M. Mr. Varga said, yes, that is what he set up with Recreation Coordinator Clare Harasimchuk. The reason they chose those hours is because it is November so they wanted to make sure it was a little warmer by afternoon. Also, there is a race that starts early that morning at Veterans Memorial Park but it should be over by 10:00 A.M. so that will not encroach on our festivities beginning at Noon. Ms. Laurenzi asked if they wanted to make it any later than 3:00 P.M. and Mr. Varga said he did not think so, and if people want to linger, they can do that.

Ms. Laurenzi suggested having a theme that they could put on flyers or tee shirts, etc. She said it was just a thought and they do not have to have anything at the moment but she read a little poem that Mr. Varga provided, "Advice from a Tree" which she thought might be a good slogan not just for Arbor Day but for the Tree Commission itself. They could use this as a slogan either annually or something that would change every year.

Ms. Laurenzi stated that she has the Arbor Day activities broken down into a couple different categories and listed events that would be time-specific. First would be the opening ceremony, and she was hoping that Mayor Jensen would do the opening ceremony. She said that Mr. Smith had talked about having somebody from the High School sing the National Anthem. Mr. Smith stated that the choir director told him that he would either have a student sing the National Anthem as a solo or have a group sing it and Mr. Smith responded that he could even include the orchestra or band members, however he wanted to plan it. And then, Mr. Smith was thinking that after the National Anthem, Mayor Jensen would read the Arbor Day Proclamation and he asked Mr. Varga if that was already written up. Mr. Varga said that he would be communicating about that with our Regional Urban Forester Stephanie Miller. Mr. Smith then said that after the reading of the Proclamation, he would think that they would plant the ceremonial tree; actually it would be two trees because one will be the Christmas Tree. There was discussion about the Christmas tree and Mr. Varga suggested a fir tree that was balled and burlapped because it would be 7 to 8 ft. tall and the ball would weigh up to 400 lbs. He has already talked to the Street Dept. Supt. and he will have the hole dug the day before and then have someone there to help with the backfill on Arbor Day. Mr. Moore asked if there would be enough time to do all that is planned and Mr. Varga said, yes, everything will be prepped ahead of time and the actual planting will not take that long.

Ms. Laurenzi stated that she would rather have a Christmas tree that is larger than 7 or 8 ft. tall. She was thinking that it was going to be a large tree that would involve a backhoe and a tree company and that is why she thought it would be done before Arbor Day and we would dedicate it on Arbor Day. Mr. Varga said, yes, we could do that but to let him see what is available first. He added that the wholesale cost of a tree that is approximately 10 ft. tall would be about \$350. Mr. Boccabella asked if that was just for the tree and did not include any equipment or manpower to plant it and Mr. Varga said, yes, that is just the tree. Mr. Moore stated that the French Creek Foundation might want to share the cost. Ms. Laurenzi said or the City or whoever sponsors the Tree lighting. Mr. Smith reminded that we have to make sure that electricity is run out there permanently.

Ms. Laurenzi asked if they wanted to have an Arbor Day banner, maybe with no date on it so it can be used again and Mr. Varga thought that was a good idea. Mr. Moore said that anything they can do to have things that they can use each year would be a good idea. Ms. Laurenzi asked if they still wanted to do the tree planting and tree pruning demonstrations and Mr. Varga said that he has to talk to Ms. Harasimchuck because she wanted to be involved as to where the Christmas tree and the Arbor Day tree are going to be planted. As far as the pruning, there are all these trees that need to be pruned that are in the parking lot at the Aquatic Center right by the pool so we could do a demonstration there.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she will work on the tree scavenger hunt with Mr. Varga and Mr. Smith. and decide on the trees that they can use. Mr. Varga stated that we want to make the hunt fun and not too involved. Ms. Laurenzi stated that the hunt she did was really simple, and then when you got to the tree there were all kinds of interesting facts about the tree. Mr. Varga noted that we have all the tree facts already there on panels so that works really well. Also, in regard to the two species that we are giving away, we should have handouts about those seedlings so that people know exactly what they are getting and how to plant them and take care of them, etc. Everyone agreed that was an excellent idea. Ms. Laurenzi stated that also on that handout she would like to put our website or email so that maybe the people can send us a picture when they plant it; then in the year before the next Arbor Day, we could check with them about their trees to give advice, etc.

Ms. Laurenzi said that at their last meeting, they discussed the designation of an official City of Avon tree. She thought that what the Tree Commission should do is to come up with a list of three trees and then let the people who come to Arbor Day vote on those trees. This was suggested at the last meeting and it is a really good idea. Mr. Smith proposed putting the contest in the City's magazine that is published quarterly and Mr. Varga noted that is what was done for naming the new park. Ms. Laurenzi stated that then they will follow suit with however they did that for the park. It was decided to announce the contest in the October edition of the magazine and continue to do voting until the City receives the official Tree City USA designation in January and declare the designated tree at that time. Ms. Laurenzi said that they will have information and maybe a little voting table at Arbor Day.

Ms. Laurenzi stated that they have discussed having the beer tent at Arbor Day. Mr. Smith said that he talked with the Law Director today and Mr. Gasior said that it makes a lot of complications for the City as far as the Tree Commission selling beer and it is not a practical thing to do. What we need is for the Lions Club to handle the beer tent and so he needs to speak to them about that and ask if they will do that. They would get the permit for selling beer not for profit and then they would keep the money. Mr. Boccabella said that he is a non-active member of the Lions Club and knows a lot of the members. Mr. Smith asked him if the Lions Club has ever sold beer as a fund raiser and Mr. Boccabella said not that he can recall. They have their own fundraisers such as Night at the Races, clambakes, etc. He said he believed that you could buy beer tickets at the clambake but that was all handled through the bartenders

at the event. Mr. Smith said, and he read on the Board of Liquor Control's website that if the place where an event is held already has a liquor permit, the event is covered under that permit. But for Arbor Day, the Lions Club will need to get a permit. Ms. Laurenzi said that we will have to see if that is ok with their rules and regulations.

There was discussion about the 100 seedlings that were going to be given out at Arbor Day and how they were to be distributed. Ms. Laurenzi suggested having a welcome table with information and the Itinerary for Arbor Day and the seedlings could be given away then. Mr. Boccabella said, but you would not want to have people carry the seedlings around the whole time they are at Arbor Day. Ms. Laurenzi noted, and also there is a problem with that because there is not really an entrance. Mr. Moore said that if they are doing a table, they could just rope off an area for it and have somebody give out the seedlings or people can take them as they leave. At Mr. Moore's suggestion, It was decided to put tickets on each seedling and give people a ticket, like a raffle ticket (one ticket per family), and they could take their seedling whenever they wanted. Ms. Laurenzi said that she would like to do that at the welcome table: give people their bags with some small giveaways in them and give them a ticket for a seedling, which they could take then or come back and get later.

Ms. Laurenzi said there were some logistics to discuss: the location of the events, the location of the tent, a stage is needed, making sure that we have trash bins, etc. She was thinking they might get the Leo's Club to help with setup and cleanup since all the money from the beer tent will go to them. We might also ask the Boy Scouts, or Girl Scouts. She wondered if there was a specific grade in the schools that is working on learning about trees, etc. during the school year. She would like to approach the teachers in, say the third grade, and tell them we would love it if they did an extra credit if they are already learning about trees that would encourage them and their families to come to Arbor Day. We could check on that in August or September.

Mr. Varga asked about the food truck for Arbor Day and Mr. Moore said he would find out about that. He said that the City has a contract with Big Show, Ltd. for the Aquatic Center and they have first right of refusal. He did not believe you can just bring in a food truck. Ms. Berges stated she thought that contract was only for when the pool was open and Mr. Moore said he would find out. Mr. Varga said that the reason he was asking was because he knows the owner of Inferno Pizza in Avon and he has a food truck and is interested in being at Arbor Day.

Craig Witherspoon, a Council member and member of the Lions Club, stopped in at the meeting. Mr. Moore informed Mr. Witherspoon that they were discussing the Arbor Day event and were wondering if the Lions Club wanted to be involved. Mr. Witherspoon asked in what way and Mr. Smith told him that the Avon Brewing Company is going to donate a keg of beer and the Tree Commission wants to give the proceeds from selling that keg to the Leo's Club because the Leo's Club helped to plant milkweed at the Cahoon House. Every year, the Tree Commission wants to give to a youth group. He explained that originally he thought that the Tree Commission could set up a beer tent and sell the beer but he talked with the Law Director and he said that would not work. We need the Lions Club to get the permit and run the beer tent. Mr. Witherspoon said that he would check it out to see if that is possible; the manpower is not a problem. Ms. Laurenzi said that the Tree Commission would help with the cost of the permit and any other expenses. Mr. Smith added that there would not be a cost for the tent as Mr. Boccabella, Taylor Rental Co., is supplying it.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she had a note to talk about flyers, advertising, etc. and on the itinerary sheet, we want to make sure that we thank all of our sponsors. She will see if she can get some other sponsors to

donate things for the giveaway bags, so hopefully, we will have a good list of Avon businesses. Mr. Boccabella asked if the food truck would have hot chocolate, coffee, juices, or drinks for the kids? Ms. Laurenzi said, yes, we need to have additional beverages and Mr. Varga said he would talk to the pizza truck owner about that. Ms. Berges stated that years ago at the Tree Lighting ceremony, they had people doing hot chocolate and she will have to go back and see who donated or did the hot chocolate. We could get somebody different than the sponsor who will be doing it at the Tree Lighting ceremony.

Ms. Laurenzi said that they want to make sure that they are notifying all of the City Departments, the Commissions, etc. to make sure that we tell them that they are welcome and we would love to have them at Arbor Day.

Ms. Berges asked what the next step was now and Ms. Laurenzi asked if they would like to have another meeting. It was agreed to have another meeting on August 3rd, 2022, in the Caucus Room at 7:30 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Laurenzi at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council