

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, August 9, 2023
At 7:30 P.M.**

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

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Shannon Laurenzi; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Liesa Wetzig; Anthony Moore

ABSENT:

Richard Varga, Certified Arborist

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Berges to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, July 12, 2023, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes"; Mr. Moore, "yes".

The vote was 7 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

DISCUSSION OF THE 2023 ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi stated that she had some updates from last month and she would go through the list. She first asked if we had a flyer like we did last year. Are we using the same flyer and updating the date or do we want to do something different? Mr. Smith said that there are two things that need to be changed on the flyer besides the date. There is a Bartlett Tree Company in Oakwood, Ohio, that wants to be a sponsor and we also need to add the Railroad Brewing Co. as a sponsor. Mr. Smith said that Mr. Varga would like to have copies of the flyer to hand out at the Tree Commission table at the Willoway Community Day on September 9th.

Mr. Moore asked if we had heard from Inforno Pizza and Mr. Smith answered that they are not going to be selling pizza at Arbor Day but they are donating a gift certificate so they are involved. Mr. Moore said that he would work with Clerk of Council Barb Brooks and get the flyer changed and then send it out and have everyone look at it. We do have to alter it a bit because there is no dedication of the Christmas tree this year.

Ms. Laurenzi asked about notifications of Arbor Day at the Avon buildings such as the Library, the Post Office, etc. and also ads to the newspapers. Mr. Moore stated that we did not do an ad last year; he did some social media things and he can do that again this year. Ms. Laurenzi asked about coverage of Arbor Day on the day it was being held and Ms. Berges said that last year she contacted the newspapers and asked them to send reporters and they did, so she will do that again this year.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she knows that Mr. Varga is working on the sponsors and donations. Mr. Smith stated that when he spoke to Mr. Varga yesterday, he said all the people that sponsored last year are

doing it again. Ms. Laurenzi asked if anybody had talked to the Mayor to see if he is available to be there that day and Mr. Moore said that he did talk to him but he will confirm that.

Ms. Laurenzi said that they did discuss that the Avon High School Choir is going to sing a couple of songs so she thought they were all good there. She and Mr. Varga have been in touch with Recreation Coordinator Clare Harasimchuk about where to plant the tree. Ms. Laurenzi said what she would like to do is choose a location and then we plan out the next few years so we have an idea going forward of what our plan is. Mr. Smith said that he went to the Aquatic Center with Mr. Varga and Mr. Varga wants to get, if possible, the biggest trees you can buy and plant them where the picnic tables are so people have shade when they are sitting there watching their children play. We did not want to get small trees that take 25 years to grow.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she assumed that they will do the same demonstrations that they did last year or do they want to do something different? Mr. Smith said that Mr. Varga's idea for Arbor Day is to have one of those big trees put in as they did at the Bay Village Arbor Day. They had a huge tree for their demonstration. He means a tree that they brought in with heavy equipment and set it in there and then they had the City crew showing how to plant it. That is what Mr. Varga is thinking but we need him to speak for himself.

Ms. Berges asked, so if they are doing a tree planting demo, would they do the big tree for the tree planting demo? Mr. Smith said that is how he understood Mr. Varga. Ms. Berges then suggested that they also do a smaller tree because most of us are not going to be planting big trees in our yards. We would have professionals do that but if we want to try to plant a tree ourselves, we need to know the proper depth, the staking method, the mulching, etc. so maybe they could do two demonstrations. Ms. Laurenzi said that was a good idea and then she mentioned the pruning demonstration. She knows that Mr. Varga did the pruning last year and they can definitely do that again. She asked if they were going to plant the redbud tree, the "Hearts of Gold" tree, which is the City tree. Is that going to be the tree they plant every year? She thought it would be cool to plant the picnic area with five or six "Hearts of Gold" trees. They will have to ask Mr. Varga about that.

Ms. Laurenzi stated, so they will make sure that they have information on that tree and then also on the giveaway saplings and a flyer on how to plant them. She asked if there were going to be two kinds of saplings this year and Mr. Traxler said, yes, and they are actually on the list of trees that we have for the Memorial Tree program - a serviceberry and a black gum. Ms. Laurenzi said, and they would do like they did last year and have information about the saplings. Mr. Traxler said that he thought that the little postcard that was attached to the saplings was a good idea.

Ms. Laurenzi noted that Mr. Boccabella had sent a list of everything that we need for the tables, etc. Mr. Smith said that last year, in order for Curt Vigg to play, they had to run an extension cord and he went to get mats to lay down over the cord. He asked if that will have to be done again because they are going to have the same set-up as last year. He said that Safety Director Duane Streater was aware of this and was going to have some kind of an electrical box with outlets installed so we did not have to run cords across the walking path. Mr. Moore said that he would check with Mr. Streater on that. Mr. Boccabelli stated, and that electrical box would not be just for Arbor Day. There are all kinds of other events held there, too, and it would serve them as well. Mr. Smith agreed that, yes, it would serve multiple purposes.

Ms. Laurenzi asked about the scavenger hunt. Are they doing the acorn scavenger hunt? Mr. Traxler said, yes, and Ms. Wetzig added that Mr. Varga said that he had picked up some acorns already and we just have to get together when he gets back.

Ms. Laurenzi stated, and then for the food she has Mr. Moore and Mr. Smith on the food committee. She said, so we are good with the beer and the fund raiser at the beer tent. She asked if the beer was still coming from the same business. Mr. Smith answered that, at the suggestion of Ms. Wetzig, they are alternating to the Railroad Brewing Company to give them an opportunity. He spoke to the owner, Tom Wagner, and he said that he would get a 5-gallon keg and that he would come and set it up on the morning of Arbor Day. Ms. Laurenzi asked if he might want to donate cups with their name on them and it would be free advertising for them. Ms. Wetzig said she was seeing them tomorrow and she would ask.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she thought they were good on entertainment. They talked about Curt Vigg and about the electric power for him. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Moore if he would keep him updated on the power system because he wants to make sure it is in place. Mr. Moore said that he would call Mr. Streator tomorrow. Ms. Laurenzi asked Mr. Smith if the High School Choir is aware that they are going to sing the National Anthem and the other songs that they want to sing. Mr. Smith said that he emailed the Choir Director and talked to him personally at the High School Musical in March about the Choir's involvement in Arbor Day but he was going to contact him again in about two weeks just as a reminder.

Ms. Wetzig asked if there would be any food trucks at Arbor Day. She said that somebody was supposed to check with the City and the list that they have. Mr. Moore said that he had not heard back from the one pizza place and thought they should pursue another avenue. Ms. Laurenzi asked if he could check with Master Pizza. Ms. Laurenzi said that they would have water and cider as they did last year. They had leftovers of both so she will probably purchase a little less.

DISCUSSION OF REQUESTING CITY COUNCIL'S APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR ARBOR DAY EXPENSES – Mr. Moore

Mr. Moore summarized the budget for Arbor Day. It will be \$3,200 on chairs, stage, podium, fire extinguishers, tents, etc., \$400 for seedlings, \$600 for prizes, giveaways, etc., \$600 for food and beverages, and \$50 for the beer permit. Those items add up to \$4,850. Other expenses were mentioned such as another \$50 for flyers and \$75 for yard signs. Ms. Laurenzi said that she thought they should say \$5,000 for the budget. Mr. Moore stated that they will ask City Council to approve \$5,000 and if they have to go back to Council next month for an additional amount, they will just make another request.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Berges to request City Council's approval for \$5,000 for the expenses of Arbor Day, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Wetzig, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes"; Mr. Moore, "yes".

The vote was 7 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

DISCUSSION OF A TREE COMMISSION BANNER – Mr. Moore

Mr. Moore turned the discussion over to Ms. Laurenzi. Ms. Laurenzi said that she has been working on the Tree Commission banner. She went to the Library and she thought that is probably their best bet as far as spending the least amount of money. It is a work in progress kind of thing. She has to go to the Library and make the banner; they are going to teach her how to use the grommet machine and all kinds

of things. She said that she had pictures on her phone of the two things she has started and she passed that around for everyone to see. Mr. Moore suggested having somebody make the banner for them and paying for it out of their budget. There was discussion about that and about making yard signs. Mr. Moore said that he would follow up on that.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Berges said that she passed out to everyone information about this group at the Avon High School called the SAVE organization. In May when they were planting flowers on Detroit Road, they had two students helping them and one of them, Madeline Weller, talked about environmental sciences in the High School and about this club. Ms. Berges said that she contacted their teacher/advisor and she is very interested in partnering with the Tree Commission on projects or volunteering and is also interested in having at least one or more members of the Tree Commission come to their club meeting to talk about what our mission is. This was right at the end of the school year so she said once school starts and they actually have their club dates, she would notify Ms. Berges and then we can make arrangements to see who wants to talk with their group.

Ms. Laurenzi said that, if Ms. Berges talked to the advisor this week, she might ask if there was anyone to help with the banner; maybe there is a student or someone in their group who might have some media background. It would be neat if somebody from this group helped us as well. Ms. Laurenzi added that maybe she will contact the advisor about this.

Ms. Berges stated that her other comment is that she will not be at the September Tree Commission meeting but she will have everything ready for the advertising for Arbor Day.

Mr. Boccabella asked if anyone on the Tree Commission is planning on going to the Tree City USA awards ceremony in Beachwood on September 20th. Mr. Smith said that the stipulation on that is that the City can send three people and we are sending Ms. Berges, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Varga. Mr. Smith is on the standby list and he definitely wants to go if there is room. If anyone else wants to get on the standby list, they should contact Rose Seighman, the Mayor's Assistant.

Mr. Smith stated that Mr. Varga gave him an email from Craig Young which was sent to the Tree Commission's email address and he wanted him to see if anyone has contacted Mr. Young. Mr. Young was asking about picking up the last newsletter as he had not received one. Mr. Varga just wanted to make sure that somebody followed up with him. Mr. Moore said that he would reach out to Mr. Young and that he would go back and pull up the emails which were sent to the Tree Commission and respond to them.

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Varga also wanted him to mention the Willoway fund raiser. Willoway has offered any community organization, including the Tree Commission, to have a table there to disseminate information about the organization. The event is 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. on Saturday, September 9th at Willoway. At 9:00 A.M. that morning, Mr. Varga is going to drop off at our table, information about the Tree Commission and pamphlets on pruning and planting trees. Also, he would like a couple hundred of the Arbor Day flyers to hand out. Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Varga will be there at the table from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., and if anyone wants to be at the table the other hours, it starts at 9:00 A.M. and ends at 3:00 P.M. Ms. Laurenzi said that she has been involved with all the emails with Mr. Varga regarding the Willoway event and she will be there that morning at 8:30 or 9:00 A.M. to set up.

Ms. Wetzig asked if anyone on the Tree Commission had addressed the email from Stephanie Betts with her comments about developers clearing the land they are developing, etc. Mr. Moore said that he was going to reach out to her. He, Mr. Varga, and the Mayor have talked a little bit about this issue. They have also met with the Law Director, the Economic Development Coordinator and the City Engineer so it is kind of out there but it is a work in progress because in working with the developers there are a lot of hurdles to jump through so we are looking at it but from an arm's length. Maybe we could start work with Council and Planning Commission on slowing down the removal of the trees, maybe requiring that they put in a certain number of trees or a percentage of trees of what they take out. It's much easier for developers to take everything out so they can do the right sanitary sewer hookups, etc. but we want to try to encourage them if at all possible to keep trees that are maybe older trees. Ms. Wetzig said a suggestion would be to have some requirements of what they have to do – to establish either keeping a percentage of the trees or planting trees.

Ms. Wetzig asked about the Christmas in July event that was to be held by the French Creek Foundation. Mr. Smith stated that they did hold that at the Main Event and he read that it went very well.

Mr. Moore apologized for his absence last month. He said that something unexpected came up so he just wanted to thank Ms. Berges for running the meeting.

Mr. Moore passed around the Commendation that State Rep. Gayle Manning had sent congratulating the City of Avon on being designated as a Tree City USA. He said that Rep. Manning has been very supportive of a lot of things in Avon and he thought it was very nice that she recognized the Tree Commission and all of the hard work that we have done.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mike Hogsta, 3337 Sandy Lane, Avon, stated that he has over 30 trees on his property and would like to know their identity. He said he was hoping that the Tree Commission could point him in the direction of a service or an arborist to help him with this.

Mr. Moore stated that we do have an arborist who is on our Commission, Rick Varga, but unfortunately he is absent tonight. Mr. Varga is our City Arborist and he has gone out to see residents and help advise them on their trees. Mr. Moore asked Mr. Hogsta to give him his phone number and he could pass it on to Mr. Varga.

Mr. Hogsta asked where the redbuds were planted and Mr. Smith answered that they were planted by the Childrens Playground near the swimming pool. One tree is planted on the right and one on the left of the entranceway area of the playground. The trees are called "Hearts of Gold" redbuds and the leaves in the summertime are a goldish-green and are beautiful, and in the spring they have purple flowers.

Mr. Hogsta asked if the seedlings they had talked about for Arbor Day were going to be the redbuds and are they for sale? Mr. Traxler responded that the seedlings will be given away. They will be black gum and service berry seedlings and they are both native trees and really nice. He told Mr. Hogsta to please come to the Arbor Day. Mr. Smith added that Arbor Day is Saturday, October 7th, 11:30 A.M. to 2.00 P.M near the Aquatic Center.

Mr. Hogsta then asked about the Willoway benefit and Ms. Laurenzi explained that Willoway is doing a benefit where they are opening up their nursery to the public to sell their trees and shrubs and a portion of that is a fund-raiser for Avon Schools. Mr. Smith said that the event is Saturday, September 9th from 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Moore said to Mr. Hogsta that he could go to the website, cityofavon.com, and we have a couple hyperlinks about the Tree Commission and some information about trees and some demos about pruning, etc.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Berges to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission and the vote was: Ms. Laurenzi, “yes”; Mr. Smith, “yes”; Mr. Traxler, “yes”; Ms. Wetzig, “yes”; Ms. Berges, “yes”; Mr. Boccabella, “yes”; Mr. Moore, “yes”.

The vote was 7 for with 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council