

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, August 10, 2022
At 7:30 P.M.**

The Chairman Pro-Tem, Mary Berges, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Chairman Pro-Tem Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Shannon Laurenzi; John Schwartz; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Certified Arborist Richard Varga (Non-Voting Member)

Law Director John Gasior, Clerk of Council Barbara Brooks

ABSENT:

Commission Member: Chairman Anthony Moore

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 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, July 13, 2022, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Schwartz, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes."

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Laurenzi to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, July 20, 2022, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, "yes"; Ms. Laurenzi, "yes"; Mr. Schwartz, "yes"; Mr. Smith, "yes"; Mr. Traxler, "yes"; Ms. Berges, "yes."

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

Ms. Berges stated that she wanted to give an update before Ms. Laurenzi speaks. She said that at their last meeting they talked about having an Arbor Day sub-committee of the Avon Tree Commission to specifically talk about Arbor Day. But upon further review, it was determined that it would be better to conduct discussions and any decisions within the meetings of the Avon Tree Commission when we are all present. That way there are no issues with Sunshine Law violations and the feeling was that if Ms. Laurenzi needs to meet with one or two members of the Commission, certainly not more than that at one time, or other members of the public, she would be free to do so on an informal basis and then report that information back to the Commission.

DISCUSSION AND PLANNING OF ARBOR DAY ACTIVITIES – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi handed out an Arbor Day celebration sheet that was similar to the one that they discussed at the Special Meeting. She said that what she wanted to do tonight was to get everybody to sign up to lead part of the Arbor Day celebration so that we can make sure that we have all the details. She already

checked a few names for the people who have been kind of doing those things anyway. So she just wants to have some contact people so that she can follow up with them and make sure we are on the same page and getting everything done. As we get closer to Arbor Day maybe we will have one Tree Commission meeting where it will just be about Arbor Day.

Ms. Laurenzi said the first thing on the handout was the Christmas Tree dedication and she asked if somebody wanted to volunteer to head that up. She had thought maybe Mr. Varga would do that since he was working on the tree. Mr. Varga said, yes, that was no problem. He said that he and Mr. Smith had gone to Willoway Nursery and they had a tree there that they reserved, an 8 ft. – 9 ft. fir. Ms. Laurenzi said that was fine and she put Mr. Varga down as the contact person for the dedication.

Mr. Varga said that he had a quick comment. He said that he talked to Recreation Coordinator Clare Harasimchuk about the planting of the tree and they will probably do that prior to Arbor Day, November 5th, only because Willoway has the tree available and they are not going to hold onto it if somebody else comes by and wants to buy it. Ms. Laurenzi said that was fine and then on Arbor Day we will do a dedication and we can talk about whether we want to do a plaque, etc.

Ms. Laurenzi noted that for the tree scavenger hunt, Mr. Varga had said that he and Mr. Traxler had already taken some pictures and she asked if one of them wants to lead that. Mr. Traxler said that he would do that.

Ms. Laurenzi said that they had talked about doing a bag of giveaways and asked if anybody had an interest in coordinating that. Mr. Varga stated that he contacted the manager at Lowes and they want to participate; they have seeds that are left over that they are going to give away in conjunction with something else. He also talked to Inferno Pizza and he wants to be involved with his pizza truck and then he talked to the Wine Room and they want to participate by giving free wine tastings but Mr. Varga was not sure how that would work. Would they need a permit?

Mr. Gasior said that he had talked to Mr. Smith about the beer tent and had advised to keep the City out of that because we do not want to be any part of collecting money. Mr. Smith told Mr. Gasior that there is a resolution to that as the Lions Club is going to get the permit and handle everything with the beer tent. Mr. Gasior said that he did not know if they can also do the wine. The business that is donating the wine probably has a license to donate that and maybe Mr. Varga should contact them and make sure that is not a problem. Mr. Gasior said that he does not want to sound like he was bailing on this but Liquor Control law is a very specialized area of the law and he has enough knowledge to know that he is not qualified to lend an opinion on what is legal and what is not legal when it comes to the distribution and serving of alcoholic beverages. Now the people that own those licenses had better know or their attorney better know what they can and cannot do with that license. So if the Wine Room wants to do this donation, they need to contact their attorney and scope it out. Mr. Gasior said he would be happy to do it but he thought that the initial party to do that should be the person who is providing the wine and the donation.

Mr. Smith stated that he spoke about the beer tent with a member of the Lions Club who told him that they have done this before and would apply for the permit and pay for it and they will give the proceeds of the beer tent to the Leo Club. Mr. Gasior said again that the Wine Room should probably explore what they need to do in order to distribute the wine. He does not know whether they charge for it or whether they are giving it away or what the rules and regulations are on that. The State does not like people giving away alcohol because they want their money; they have that tax on the liquor. You are not getting the

liquor wholesale; people have already paid the tax on that bottle and the State expects that bottle is going to generate a certain number of dollars in income with a sales tax and they want to see that. Now there may be permits that can be pulled by non-profits where the State is perfectly fine with that non-profit giving away the alcohol but the non-profit should be answering those questions for you.

Mr. Varga said that he would follow up on that. He added that if they could get a big enough tent, they could have the wine with the beer. Mr. Boccabella stated that the tent or the tents that we are going to need will depend on the space that is available. Mr. Gasior said that they might want to talk to the Fire Department with regard to the tents because there are some fire regulations with tents depending upon their size. Certain size tents need to be inspected by the City Fire Inspector to make sure that everything is secure but a small tent may not be a problem. The City would have to permit a tent if it is of a certain size and he was sure the City would be happy to waive the fee for the inspector.

Ms. Laurenzi said that next on the list is the Avon City Tree, getting all of that information together for the three trees and putting together voting and Mr. Moore said that he would head that up. Mr. Varga said they talked to Paula Pitasky about advertising the contest in the City newsletter and she thought that it might be more of a problem when you have all these people involved voting on these trees. She thought the Tree Commission should just probably vote on it because we are more knowledgeable about what we want. Ms. Laurenzi said that they could do it either way but she thought they had talked about presenting the three trees that they thought would be good choices and then let the residents be involved and choose the tree. She personally thinks this is a good idea, even if only a few people vote.

Ms. Laurenzi stated, so the chosen tree would be the Avon City Tree and the tree that we would likely, as the Tree Commission, plant in places throughout the City. Mr. Gasior noted that Council would have to appropriate money to buy the trees so if you are going to put them on public property, Council should be aware of that. Ms. Laurenzi said that it would not necessarily be something that we had to plant. It might be opportunities to recommend trees to plant and the tree type would be known and available to the residents if they wanted to plant them in their yards, etc.

Mr. Schwartz said, just to clarify, he was thinking that the chosen tree would be the Avon City Tree just as the buckeye is the State tree, and it is not necessarily that we as the Tree Commission would be planting this tree but we would be recommending to residents that this tree has a look and shape that we would like to see represented more in the City. So that was his understanding of what this voting was for so we could kind of champion this one tree both because it is a native and because of its look. Mr. Varga added that the tree that he recommended is a native and it has the purple flowers in the spring and then all summer long it has gold leaves that are heart-shaped. So you have purple and gold throughout the seasons.

Mr. Laurenzi then said, in regard to presenting the three different trees and the voting, it could be 50 people voting or 10 people; she is not expecting hundreds of people to vote for the tree. And she thought that they would announce that tree when we announce our Tree City USA designation. Mr. Moore said that he would head that up to gather the information and put together the sheet for the voting, etc. We will all work on the three trees and he will be the contact person to make sure we have everything we need.

Ms. Laurenzi said she has put Mr. Smith as the lead person for the beer tent. We have not talked about any food yet. Mr. Smith reminded that Mr. Varga had spoken with Inferno Pizza and he wants to bring his mobile pizza oven so that is covered. Mr. Varga said that he will firm that up with him to make sure he

knows the date, etc. Mr. Smith asked if the Tree Commission would be purchasing cups, etc. and Ms. Laurenzi said that she feels strongly that we use a recyclable cup and we need to have recycling trash cans for the cups. The cups might be something that we would help purchase. Mr. Smith said that he would speak to the Lions Club about that.

Ms. Berges stated that we will have beer and wine for the adults but there are going to be kids there and people who do not drink so she asked about having water or hot chocolate. Ms. Laurenzi said, yes, we will need those as well so we need to figure that out. Maybe a business in the community would be willing to donate that or maybe the school system.

Ms. Laurenzi said that the next thing to talk about is the tree saplings that we are going to be giving away. She knows that John Traxler has already done all that work and ordered them, etc. and so they will just keep him as the person in charge. We will need to identify who is going to receive the saplings and she thought that they have enough to give every family one. She thought it would be kind of neat to have people sign their name when they took it or give their email address and then we could send them an email in a year to ask about the tree or if they had any questions. She just thought it would be kind of neat to follow the path of a few of those trees. Mr. Schwartz said to Mr. Traxler that, since he is doing this, he would be more than willing to help Mr. Traxler with the scavenger hunt and he told Ms. Laurenzi to put him down to help with that.

Mr. Varga said that he sent everybody information about the saplings that they are giving away; it tells all about the tree, the problems it might have, etc. so we could make copies of that to go along with the saplings. Ms. Laurenzi said, yes, absolutely, that was one of the things she had on the list, making sure there were planting and care instructions, etc.

Ms. Laurenzi stated that we need volunteers for set up and clean up teams and she thought maybe the Leo Club, or the Scouts could help in that way. And that would also encourage those groups and their families to come to the event. She said that if anybody has any ideas, to please let her or Mr. Boccabella know.

Ms. Laurenzi asked if anybody had an interest in doing the advertising for Arbor Day, and Ms. Berges said that she would do that.

Ms. Laurenzi asked if anybody wanted to help Mr. Varga with sponsors and donations and Mr. Smith said that he would help. Ms. Laurenzi stated that she will be helping everyone along the way, too. She added that she is assigning people to take leadership and some responsibility but that does not mean that anyone else cannot help with any of these projects that we have going on.

Ms. Laurenzi said that the other thing was City involvement. She would really like to see if we can press the City to be involved. She wondered if the Police and Fire Departments might bring in a fire truck for the kids to look at or an ambulance, etc. just to kind of make a big deal. She also mentioned involvement of the Garden Club and the Library and would keep that under Mr. Varga's leadership. Mr. Varga stated that he will be following up with the Metroparks also.

Ms. Laurenzi said she thought that was it as far as overhead things to touch on for the Tree Commission. She will put all this together and put notes under each item and then probably reach out to each of them about their specific topic and go from there and see what we need to do. So everyone will have a contact person for any one of these things. We will do updates and follow up on everything for Arbor Day in our

Tree Commission meetings. If we need to have a Special Meeting specifically for the Arbor Day planning, we may do one near Arbor Day but she was hoping that we can avoid having any extra meetings.

DISCUSSION OF PLANTING AN EVERGREEN TREE AT THE AVON AQUATIC CENTER TO SERVE AS THE CHRISTMAS TREE FOR THE ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY – Mr. Varga

Mr. Varga stated, as he mentioned earlier, he and Mr. Smith went to Willoway Nursery and procured the tree and he talked to Ms. Harasimchuk and they are going to work together on planting the tree previous to Arbor Day. They are going to pick the tree up and arrange to plant it. Ms. Laurenzi said she thought it was decided to plant it between the two walkways. Mr. Varga said, yes, and he was there with Service Director Duane Streater, Mr. Smith, and Clint Gault. Mr. Smith added that Mr. Gault is the President of the French Creek Foundation and he was very pleased with the tree and its location.

DISCUSSION OF CHOOSING A TREE TO BE KNOWN AS THE OFFICIAL TREE OF THE CITY OF AVON – Mr. Schwartz

Mr. Schwartz stated that Mr. Moore contacted him and wanted to know if he wanted to take the lead on this so here we are. He said that he still has to come up with two trees and he was going to be relying on Mr. Traxler and Mr. Varga for that. As of now, the redbud seems great. He said that he knew that Mr. Traxler had a tree that he had grafted but it is not available. He noted that Mr. Varga had said that the redbud is available in at least three local nurseries. Mr. Varga said he was at two nurseries today and they both have them although they are not large. Mr. Schwartz said that between now and the next meeting he will be coming up with names. He just wants to make sure that it is a tree that could be utilized by all the residents and they will have to have more discussion.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Varga stated that he will not be here for the next meeting. He will be representing the Tree Commission of Avon, Ohio, in Sweden at the International Society of Arboriculture, which is being held from September 10th to September 17th.

Mr. Gasior stated that he thought he said what he wanted to say about the meetings of the Avon Tree Commission. The requirement is to have prearranged gatherings of a majority of members of public bodies for the purpose of discussing public business. So a meeting has to be prearranged and with a purpose. A phone call between members to make sure that things are going as planned is not a problem. So you can talk amongst yourselves to give Ms. Laurenzi an update of where you are, etc. Those kind of conversations that you have amongst yourselves are not considered prearranged meetings. So you can update Ms. Laurenzi and then in the September meeting, she will report on it. He said that he does not think that they need Special Meetings. Just do what they need to do in their time away and then come back here at your regularly scheduled meeting and make your report in that meeting. He said that if anybody has any questions or concerns about this, to give him a call.

Ms. Berges said that she just wanted to mention that she and Mr. Moore went to the last French Creek Foundation meeting to talk to them about Arbor Day, just to let them know because it is taking place in the French Creek District and they are very good about helping out. They asked what we needed from them and so she asked Ms. Laurenzi to contact them if there is anything that she specifically would like them to do. Ms. Berges said that, otherwise she said to them, to think about what they would like to do as well and they will get back to us.

Ms. Berges said, and then she also had a thought about Mr. Varga and Mr. Moore giving a presentation to the Senior Center. They have monthly meetings and it would be just a 10-minute presentation to let them know about Arbor Day. They are usually very interested and involved in what is happening in the City and may be willing to volunteer at Arbor Day if we give the presentation early enough. Ms. Laurenzi said that is a great idea and she will set that up.

ADJOURN

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

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:13 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council