

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, September 14, 2022
At 7:30 P.M.**

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

OATH OF OFFICE

The Oath of Office was administered by John Gasior, Law Director, to Liesa Wetzig for the unexpired term on the Avon Tree Commission ending December 31, 2026

PRESENT:

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

Law Director John Gasior; Clerk of Council Barbara Brooks

ABSENT:

Commission Member: Certified Arborist Richard Varga (Non-Voting Member)

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Laurenzi to amend the agenda by adding Item 5A – Discussion of Official City of Avon Tree, and to accept the agenda as amended. 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.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022

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, August 10, 2022, 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 OFFICIAL CITY OF AVON TREE

Mr. Smith stated that Rick Varga asked him to bring up the official City of Avon Tree for discussion at tonight’s meeting and as far as he is aware, we just have one recommendation and that is from Mr. Varga and it is for a redbud. The common name is “Hearts of Gold” and the scientific name is “Cersis Canadensis”. Mr. Varga just wanted to get the ball rolling where our Commission would make a motion to send that recommendation of the “Hearts of Gold” tree to City Council and then City Council would do an official proclamation vote to make that the official City tree. Mr. Varga wanted to get this going so that on Arbor Day we could announce that we have an official City tree. Mr. Smith asked if anyone had any

other species of tree that they were interested in and there were no other recommendations. Ms. Laurenzi said, so this will be on the City Council agenda and Mr. Smith said, yes, that he and Mr. Varga had spoken with Mayor Jensen last week and the Mayor believed that Council would make an official proclamation that the “Hearts of Gold” redbud is the official City of Avon Tree and they would vote on that proclamation. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Moore if he would handle taking the recommendation of the “Hearts of Gold” redbud as the official City tree to City Council. Mr. Moore said, yes, that he would, and asked if anyone had any questions about the redbud or the previous discussion. Ms. Wetzig noted that she has a beautiful redbud in her backyard.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Traxler to take to City Council the recommendation that the redbud, “Hearts of Gold”, be designated as the official City of Avon Tree. 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 AND PLANNING OF ARBOR DAY ACTIVITIES – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi stated that they would go through the list of activities and asked if we still wanted to announce the official City tree when we announce that we are a Tree City USA. Mr. Smith said that he would want to ask Mr. Varga about that but he thought that Arbor Day would be an ideal time to announce our official City tree; and certainly on our application for Tree City USA that is important. Mr. Moore agreed that it was a good idea to announce the official tree on Arbor Day. It is going to be in the City Council minutes anyway and word will get around so we might as well promote it in case anybody wants to plant it in the fall.

Ms. Laurenzi then continued with the list of activities as follows:

- a. Updates on the Christmas Tree dedication – Mr. Smith reported that the Parks and Recreation Dept. got the tree from Willoway Nursery in Avon and planted it at the Aquatic Center and it looks beautiful.
- b. Tree Scavenger Hunt – Ms. Laurenzi stated that she put Ms. Wetzig in this spot in the Arbor Day celebration to replace John Schwartz. She added to Ms. Wetzig that she is welcome to join any other events or if she is not able to help with anything in the spots where Ms. Laurenzi has already placed her, to please let her know.
- c. Bag Giveaway – Ms. Laurenzi said that she was working on getting some pricing on recycled bags.
- d. Food – Ms. Laurenzi said that she put Doug Wetzig as the contact for the Lions Club tent and Mr. Smith said, yes, that was correct and he added that he has a keg of beer secured from Avon Brewing Co. which the Lions Club will sell and the profits will go to the youth branch of the Lions, the Leo Club. He thanked Mr. Wetzig for working on this and asked if he had applied for the permit yet. Mr. Wetzig said that he needed the dimensions of the tents and Mr. Smith said they can get that from Mr. Boccabella. Also, Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Varga talked to InForno Pizza on Chester Road and the owner said he will bring his portable wood-fired pizza oven to Arbor Day. That is all the food we have lined up for now. He made an attempt

to go to the Black Keys Coffee Shop but they were closed. Ms. Laurenzi said that she will check with them to see if they are able to participate.

Ms. Laurenzi noted that we are doing the fund raiser with the beer tent for the Leo Club. Her personal thought is that if any other groups want to participate in Arbor Day, that we keep any fundraising for whatever group the Tree Commission has decided on for that year, meaning if anyone else wants to come and set up a tent that they would all participate in the fund raiser that we have chosen. Not that we would say no if anyone had an adamant reason to do a different one but it just brings some continuity to the Arbor Day and kind of helps support our cause as opposed to having fund raising for several different kinds of events or different things. Her anticipation is that we will do the fund raising for a different group next year, a group that is going to help the Tree Commission in some way in the City.

- e. Tree Saplings – Mr. Traxler said that it looks like we received an invoice for the saplings and there is a brochure for planting instructions. Ms. Laurenzi confirmed that we did decide to have tickets for the saplings, to give everyone half a ticket as they enter, and we would keep half so we know exactly how many trees are being given away. And then the people can either collect the sapling at the time or collect it later with their half ticket as they are leaving.
- f. Grounds and Set Up – Mr. Boccabella stated that on August 17th, he, Ms. Laurenzi, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Varga went to the Aquatic Center area to lay out the tents and try to figure out everything we needed. He said he passed out a map and a drawing tonight and it shows where we decided to locate the two tents. We are going to have two 20 ft x 30 ft. tents there; one will be primarily the beer tent and the other tent will be for registration, vendors, etc. The tents will have sidewalls and at least for now, we decided that we are going to have 12 tables and 64 chairs, a small stage, a podium, a microphone and some recyclable trash bins. All those items will be set up on Thursday or Friday before the event date and will be taken down Sunday or Monday following the event. The approximate cost of all those items is \$1,900. He said that he has talked to the Avon Fire Dept. and we need an event permit and he will obtain that. The Fire Dept. will require some information on the tents which he can send over to Fire Inspector Eric Dudziak. Ms. Laurenzi asked if the trash bins are provided by the City or if we had to rent them. Mr. Boccabella said that the City can get them and the ones he was talking about are the disposable ones. Ms. Brooks added that she can talk to Safety/Service Director Duane Streater about that and she can also contact Republic Services because they have provided those disposable cardboard bins for events in the past; she will call Republic and get a price.
- g. Advertising/Notification – Ms. Berges stated that she has a list of all the different media outlets such as the Sun News, the Westlife, the Elyria Chronicle, and the Lorain Morning Journal. Unfortunately the City newsletter is already done and the next issue will not be until November after our event. So we are not going to be able to put it in the newsletter but we can put it on the City's website. We can also put something in the water bills because those go to every home. Mr. Smith said that he and Mr. Varga spoke with Paula Pitasky, who edits the City newsletter, well over a month ago and she was going to put in a one-line "Save the Date" for the Arbor Day celebration. Ms. Berges said, yes, the date was in the newsletter but it is just if we wanted to put any more detail in the newsletter we kind of missed the boat on that. Ms. Berges said that we also have social media sites and the City has a Face Book page so those are other ways to get the word out. In getting ready to do flyers, she asked if we

have any specific times for the different events and Ms. Laurenzi said that with Arbor Day being such a short event, only from 12:00 noon to 3:00 P.M., she thought that we do not need to put specific times for events on the flyers. Hopefully, people will come early and stay for the whole thing. Ms. Berges said that the only thing was that Mr. Varga was going to do a pruning demonstration and he may only be willing to do that at a few certain times. She said she would not want somebody to come specifically for the demonstration and then miss it, so she hoped there was a way we can put some of that information out there. Ms. Laurenzi then agreed that we will have to put a little more detail on the schedule.

Ms. Laurenzi asked how we could get pictures taken at the event to publish in the next City newsletters. Who takes those pictures and how do we make sure they are going to be at Arbor Day? Ms. Brooks said that Mr. Tuneberg often takes pictures for Council at the request of the Mayor but she is not sure what all is involved in that. Mr. Moore said that he could ask the Mayor about that. Ms. Berges said that the deadline for the newsletter is November 14th, so we could get pictures after the fact for the next issue. Ms. Laurenzi said that we need to talk to Paula Pitasky and tell her that we are going to want whatever she can give us in the newsletter.

- h. Sponsors and Donations – Ms. Laurenzi asked if there were any updates on any additional sponsors or donations and stated that she needed to add InForno Pizza.
- i. City Involvement – Ms. Laurenzi said that this is not anything that needs to be done prior. She just wants to make sure that as the date gets closer, we are letting all of the City employees know about Arbor Day, to make sure they know when it is and that they are welcome and we would really like to see them attend and be involved.

Mr. Moore said that he can reach out to all the City Departments. If somebody can put together a very simple invitation, he can e-invite them through the City email. Ms. Brooks said that she could help him with that.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Berges welcomed Ms. Wetzig and said that it was nice to have her. She said her only other comment is to say that we should put the Tree City USA application on the agenda for next month because that is coming up as well and we might want to spend time just going over that and who is going to prepare it, what information needs to be gathered, etc., so that we are ready. Mr. Moore said that is a good idea because we need to see where we are in that process.

Ms. Laurenzi said that Mr. Smith took her on a tour of the Cahoon House the other day and what a beautiful home it is and what a great job has been done in restoring it to its previous glory. She said that she highly recommends taking a tour to anyone who has not seen it.

Mr. Smith stated that he took a hike today over at the Miller Nature Preserve wetlands, the new addition to the park off from Riegelsberger Road and he knows that the City of Avon and the Lorain County Metroparks worked in conjunction to make that possible and he is really pleased with what has been done. It is just beautiful back there and is a real asset to our community so he thanks the City and the Lorain County Metroparks.

Mr. Traxler welcomed Ms. Wetzig to the Avon Tree Commission.

Ms. Wetzig said that she was glad to be here and added that she also walked on the new wetlands park trail and agreed with Mr. Smith that it was beautiful.

Mr. Moore stated that he went for the Metroparks ribbon-cutting at the new park and it was awesome. He thinks he will be coming to the Tree Commission about how we can be involved with the Metroparks on planting trees there. He also thanked Ms. Wetzig for becoming a member of the Tree Commission; he appreciates her time.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Jim Kershaw, 3548 Brook Court, Avon, Ohio, said that he was here at the meeting at the encouragement of Rick Varga. Mr. Kershaw said that he has a unique situation and it is a problem that he does not think the Tree Commission is prepared to address. In his subdivision there are 48 homes and up until this year, there were 48 homes and 48 trees on the tree lawns. This year one of the homeowners said that his tree was giving him roots in the tree lawn and he did not want it anymore so he took the tree out and there is no law or rule about why he should replace the tree. Yet this whole idea of being a Tree City USA is to have a canopy of trees over a street, adding a lot to the neighborhood. So Mr. Kershaw is hoping that the Tree Commission at some point in time will move Council to the point that they will enact some kind of legislation with some teeth to it so if someone takes out a tree, they will be encouraged in some way, shape or form to replace the tree. He added that Mr. Varga even met with the homeowner that took the tree out and told him there were a lot of fine options for replacing the tree and he said, no, he did not like trees, and that was the end of the discussion.

Mr. Moore said that he is on City Council and is surprised that Mr. Varga said that because Mr. Moore was one of the ones that beat the drum for Tree City USA and he met with Mr. Varga and mentioned having legislation in place for guidance regarding trees. Mr. Moore said since he is on City Council and the Chairman of the Tree Commission, it would be some guidance to bring before City Council and address things like that and ultimately maybe work with builders and developments and what they are doing with their trees and their canopy. So he did have a conversation with Mr. Varga about all this. Mr. Kershaw said that more than anything else, it was that Mr. Varga was frustrated that there did not seem to be much progress, that it was stalled and did not seem to be going anywhere.

Mr. Moore stated that the biggest priorities right now are getting the Tree City USA designation and holding Arbor Day. He wants to get past our Arbor Day and then maybe get the Tree Commission involved with legislation when we have a little bit more down time.

Mr. Kershaw said that is what they are looking for. At this point in time, he does not think other homeowners will be taking out trees because they do not like them. Most were kind of aghast that the tree was removed and asked if it was something that had to be replaced. Unfortunately our bylaws do not say that. The builder did not put that in the bylaws and our current Board is reluctant to give a penalty for it.

Ms. Berges asked Mr. Kershaw if his subdivision was new and he said, no, it has been there for 17 years. Ms. Berges then asked if the Board could not do a resolution that would be voted on by a majority of the residents in that neighborhood. Mr. Kershaw said that unfortunately there are presently only two Board members and the one who took out the tree is one of the members so it is not going anywhere right now.

And there are other issues going on in the subdivision but this is one that he thought would be appropriate to bring before the Tree Commission and say we would like to see that encouragement.

Mr. Gasior said that we may have adopted some legislation in that regard already. It has been a year since we did the Ordinance but he knows that we looked at several communities surrounding Avon and tried to adopt provisions in our Chapter that would be sensible for Avon. He vaguely remembers that we did something with removal of trees on a tree lawn. He asked Mr. Kershaw to give him his contact information and either he or the Service Director would call him after we find out what is in the Ordinance. If there is something that we need, Mr. Moore can address it with City Council.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Moore to adjourn the meeting of the Avon Tree Commission, 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 and the meeting adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council