

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, October 11, 2023
At 7:30 P.M.**

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

PRESENT:

Commission Members: Mary Berges; Alex Boccabella; Shannon Laurenzi; Matt Smith; John Traxler; Leisa Wetzig; Certified Arborist, Richard Varga (Non-Voting Member)

ABSENT:

Chairman, 3rd Ward Councilman Anthony Moore

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE AVON TREE COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Wetzig to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Tree Commission held Wednesday, September 13, 2023, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Boccabella, “yes”; Ms. Laurenzi, “yes”; Mr. Smith, “yes”; Mr. Traxler, “yes”; Ms. Wetzig, “yes”; Ms. Berges, “abstain”.

The vote was 5 for and 1 abstention and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

REVIEW OF THE 2023 ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION – Ms. Laurenzi

Ms. Laurenzi thanked everyone for all their hard work; it was a terrific day and a big success again this year. She said that she gave all the unclaimed raffle gifts to Clerk of Council Barb Brooks so that residents can come to City Hall to pick them up and that she can call them to let them know. She contacted Avon East and is going to drop off the Arbor Day bags to them as they have a use for them.

Ms. Berges stated that Cleveland.com did a story on Arbor Day, Westlife published a small story today on Arbor Day with two pictures, and there should be a story tomorrow in the Sun Sentinel so that was nice coverage. Ms. Berges then said that at Monday night’s Council meeting, Mayor Jensen asked to pass along commendations to the Tree Commission. He thought that the Tree Commission did a wonderful job with Arbor Day and he is just very happy with everything that the Tree Commission is doing, so he wanted that to be passed along to all of us.

Mr. Boccabella said that one of the things that he will do different next year will be the sound system. He thought that they need something that is more geared toward outdoor use so when we are talking the people can really hear us. When we get to that point, he will look at different options, something a little louder with more carrying distance.

Mr. Smith asked if we ever had the sticker books and coloring books for the kids and Ms. Laurenzi said that she did not order those as they were pretty pricy.

Ms. Wetzig stated that she liked the beer setup with the cans. It gave people more options and it was easier because they did not have to worry about ice and extra pitchers, etc. Mr. Smith asked how much

the beer tent made for the Leo Club and Ms. Wetzig said \$130 but she thought if the weather had been nicer we would have had a better turnout. But it was still pretty good. Mr. Smith thanked her for providing the bartenders.

Mr. Varga said that his grandkids thought the scavenger hunt was great; everyone did a fabulous job with that. But in conjunction with that, he thought that maybe in the future we ought to have more entertainment or activity for the kids just to keep them there a little bit longer. Once they were done with the scavenger hunt, they really did not have anything to do although some went over to the playground.

Ms. Laurenzi said that she had asked the high school group that did face painting at the Willoway event to come for Arbor Day but they were unavailable because of Homecoming. But she will put that in our notes to contact them next year and hopefully Arbor Day will not be the same weekend as Homecoming next year.

Mr. Boccabella said that he was talking to Mr. Moore yesterday and he suggested maybe a bounce house or something along that line for next year for the kids. Mr. Smith said that they could have pony rides, or a petting zoo, etc. He noted that Mr. Traxler's daughter was involved in things like that and Mr. Traxler said, yes, she does those princess parties, so she is familiar with companies that do face painting, etc. And maybe we could have a princess or a character for a story hour with the Library. Ms. Berges stated that this year the Library did a story walk and did a book all along there but again, with the weather, she did not know how many kids participated in that.

Everyone thanked Ms. Laurenzi for her leadership and congratulated her on another successful Arbor Day.

DISCUSSION OF A TREE RING PROJECT – Ms. Berges and Mr. Varga

Ms. Berges said that she would give the background on this item and then turn it over to Mr. Varga. Ms. Berges said that a couple weeks ago they were at the Beachwood Community Center for the Tree City USA Awards Ceremony and during the break, they were walking in these different rooms where they had artists display their artwork related to trees. There were photographs and oil paintings and watercolors but in the one room they had this tree ring on display. It was mounted, it had a plexiglass cover on it and dates were written on the plexiglass relating to Beachwood's Bicentennial and relating to the rings of the tree, and the age of the tree. The display was on wheels so it could be transported. We thought this was a great idea so we brought it back to Mayor Jensen and he also thought it was a great idea for Avon so he supported the project.

Mr. Varga said so then they went out looking for trees and as they were going through the History Walk, there was a big black locust tree that had come down. We are going to try to utilize that because it seems like it is going to be a good piece of wood and it is on City property so we do not have to engage a resident. So we are going to start working on cutting that up. We can cut several sections in case one chips or it cannot be used so we will have plenty of backup and he thought it is going to work out extremely well.

Mr. Smith stated that he knows that Mayor Jensen wants two of these displays constructed so they can be used simultaneously at different institutions around the City, like the Library, the Schools, the Senior Center, Old Town Hall, and the lobby at City Hall.

Ms. Berges stated that she took a picture of the tree ring at Beachwood and emailed it to everyone so it gives them an idea of what it looks like.

Mr. Boccabella asked Mr. Varga if he could guess at the age of the black locust tree and Mr. Varga said he could only estimate but he thought it was about 150 years.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Laurenzi asked about the “activity tracking sheet” that was in front of her and Mr. Varga said that was for our Tree City USA designation. It is to show all the activity that we have spent volunteering which goes towards our next year as far as becoming a Tree City. Mr. Varga said to everyone to fill it out the best they can, listing the days of activities and number of hours spent. It also works in conjunction with us getting awards for how much we volunteer and how much we give back to the community.

Mr. Boccabella asked if this activity sheet should be filled out going forward or are they to think about what they have done already. Mr. Varga said to fill it out in arrears; most of the activity, he thought, was with Arbor Day and being at the Willoway event promoting the Tree Commission and the City of Avon. All that helps us down the road as far as maintaining our status as a Tree City USA and with our awards. Mr. Smith added that Michelle Morahan in the Service Dept. will get this data. She collects all of the data and puts it together for our Tree City USA designation so this will help her out tremendously.

Mr. Boccabella asked, as a Commission, is there a goal as to the number of hours that we should strive for and Mr. Varga said, yes, for certain awards. All of our volunteering of time accumulates towards our recertification as a Tree City USA and also receiving awards so filling out these activity sheets is very important.

Mr. Traxler said that he just wanted to thank the Garden Club. They really made a big difference and made it so much easier. It is so nice to work with a group that has a similar goal and he hoped that they can help the Garden Club in the future. Also it was really nice and made a big difference to have the helpers from the High School from the Leo Club.

Ms. Wetzig stated that she has the original license permit for the beer tent and sent a copy to Clerk of Council Barb Brooks. She said that she appreciated all the help from the Garden Club; it was very good and allowed them some free time to move around.

Mr. Varga gave his thanks also to the Garden Club. They had talked about Arbor Day at the Garden Club meeting a few months back and then it all came together and it was really great.

Ms. Berges stated that she had a few quick things: First, the Tree City USA application is due December 1st. She hoped that they all were on the email list of Urban Forester Matt Leiden as he sends out information like that. If they do not get his emails, let Mr. Varga or her know and they will make sure they get information to them. Ms. Berges added that May 16, 2024, is next year’s Tree City USA Awards Ceremony and it is going to be held in Rocky River so it will be much closer for us. And then, in 2026, Avon will be hosting the Tree City USA Awards Ceremony.

Ms. Berges said that, at the Awards Ceremony, one of the speakers talked about this program called “i-Tree” and if you put in there a tree that you are planting, it will come back and tell you all kinds of information about that tree such as how much carbon dioxide it will sequester, its water retention, the future dollar value of the tree, etc. Ms. Berges said that today a resident was asking her if the City looked at carbon dioxide intake of trees. Mr. Varga noted that a tree canopy is directly related to the absorption of carbon dioxide; there is a formula to figure out how much absorption there is with a specific tree. For

instance, a locust tree does not have the absorption rate that a maple or a silver oak would have just because of the structure of the canopy.

Ms. Berges then said that a few months ago, there was a homework chart that was passed out from the Tree Academy and she would like it if they could all fill that out and talk about it at the November Tree Commission meeting because she thought the intent was to give that to the Council members and have them fill it out and see what they think; it gives us a good benchmark for where we are today. Ms. Berges said that if anyone needs a replacement copy of the homework chart, she can arrange to get that to them.

Ms. Berges stated that she did not have anything else except to thank the Garden Club as well. You all are wonderful; we appreciate it.

AUDIENCE

Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki, 2828 Shakespeare Lane, said that she was there on behalf of the Garden Club. She thanked the Tree Commission very much for including them in the Arbor Day celebration. It was wonderful. They had a good time and learned some things when Mr. Traxler took them out on the trail, so it was very worthwhile. They certainly did enjoy the children, the saplings, and just being there and being a part of the community in this effort. She thanked them again for including the Garden Club and hoped that they would include them next year. On the Garden Club's behalf, she thanked them not only for that but for all the effort. It was clearly evident the time and effort and thoughtfulness that the Tree Commission put into Arbor Day this year.

ADJOURN

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

The vote was 6 for and 0 against and the Chairman Pro Tem declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council