

TREE BOARD

March 1, 2021

The Tree Board of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met for a virtual meeting appearing via video conference on the 1st day of March 2021, at 4:00 P.M.

ITEM 1, being:

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Menzie and Members Buthod, Fagin, Janaway, Pape, Spain and Tedder-Loffland

Absent: Member Huffman

City Officials: Tim Vermillion, City Forester
Karla Sitton, Administrative Technician IV

ITEM 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Member Pape made the motion and Member Tedder-Loffland seconded to approve the minutes. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Buthod, Fagin, Janaway, Pape, Spain and Tedder-Loffland

NAY: None

ITEM 3, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Member Tedder-Loffland made the motion and Member Spain seconded to approve the agenda. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Buthod, Fagin, Janaway, Pape, Spain and Tedder-Loffland

NAY: None

ITEM 4, being:

VOTE ON HISTORIC TREE NOMINATION

Mr. Tim Vermillion, City Forester, said an application to nominate a tree as a historic tree designation was submitted by Scott Casso, 401 W. Tonhawa Street. He said the Bur Oak tree is structurally sound and unique by description as one of the largest of its kind in Norman. Mr. Casso's application indicates the tree has high aesthetic appeal and is a focal point on the property. A custom-built fence has been constructed to highlight and maintain the high aesthetic appeal as well.

Mr. Vermillion said this is a shared tree; although it is clearly in the applicant's back yard, and one owner cannot make choice to cut it down without the other's consent. He said the house is going into probate and the decision to make the tree historic would protect the tree.

The Board discussed and agreed the tree should be designated as a historic tree.

Chairman Menzie made the motion and Member Pape seconded to approve the Historic Tree Nomination located at 401 W. Tonhawa Street. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH:	Chairman Menzie and Members Buthod, Fagin, Janaway, Pape, Spain and Tedder-Loffland
NAY:	None

ITEM 5, being:

**CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN CONSULTANT
DRAFT PROPOSALS**

Mr. Tim Vermillion, City Forester, said today's discussion regarding the Urban Forest Master Plan Consultant Draft Proposals with the two firms, PlanitGeo and Davey Tree would address the City's needs in terms of an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP). He said both consultants provided informational packets and RFP's will be sent out at a later date; likely more firms will send in responses to our RFP.

Member Spain asked since there has been new Members added to City Council, has the purpose for this issue changed any and Mr. Vermillion said the brakes could be put on slightly, as well as the City will still need to determine the funding mechanism to achieve this goal. Mr. Vermillion said the Planning Department has a tree ordinance for new construction that he felt needed to be amended. He said all the pertinent departments could come together and discuss, i.e., Planning, Forestry, Utilities, etc., and Chairman Menzie agreed that would be a good idea. Mr. Vermillion said the Tree Board could recommend which consultant they felt was best as well as determining goals and how to achieve those goals can be done. He said the number of goals will help determine if more employees will be needed in order to get them accomplished. Mr. Vermillion requested goals and actions from the Tree Board to assist Staff. He said Staff needs more planting locations suggestions and felt good quality spots will come at a later phase.

Mr. Vermillion said as a monetary example, regarding new home construction tree requirement, stating that a 2-inch tree costs \$250-\$300 each and would cost more to have them planted if Staff was unable to do so. He felt some type of relief needs to be given to homeowners who plant a tree(s) but it keeps dying due to problem/poor soil. Member Spain agreed with Staff and felt Mr. Vermillion has already said a few goals that need to be done. Member Tedder-Loffland felt goals needed to be done first and a funding mechanism could be determined at a later date. Chairman Menzie asked whether public funds could be used to plant trees in private front yards and Staff said no.

Member Tedder-Loffland said she is looking to Staff since Mr. Vermillion is an expert and has spoken to each of the consultants. Mr. Vermillion said he preferred GeoPlanet best; however, either consultant would be good. Member Buthod said she agreed with Mr. Vermillion's choice, stating both consultants have worked in cities similar to Norman. Mr. Vermillion said he will continue to look at both proposals, draft a RFP, and schedule a stakeholder meeting with the caveat that goals can be determined, but not completed until funding is available. Mr. Vermillion said he can work on a survey and asked if the Board wanted to do a separate meeting when it is completed. Member Spain said he would rather have everyone (other Departments) at the table at the same time. Member Tedder-Loffland said a "town hall" meeting could be hosted to gather comments, either from Zoom or live-streamed through YouTube.

A representative from Rieger Law Group was in attendance on the Zoom meeting and Staff asked if they had any comments they wanted to share. The representative said not at this time.

ITEM 6, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Mr. Tim Vermillion, City Forester, told the Board he was testing 50 trees that Staff already has to see if they are alive and well after the Winter weather we have had. He said a 40-tree planting along US Hwy 77 and Classen Boulevard has been completed with 20 bald cypress and 20 swamp white oak. Mr. Vermillion said both species did well through the recent ice/snow storm.

Mr. Vermillion asked the Board if they had any tree weather related questions and Member Buthod asked about crepe myrtles. He said he can talk to a professional crepe myrtle breeder to see if anything can be done to help them survive.

Member Buthod said the Oklahoma Invasive Plant Council holds monthly webinars and is currently working on a new watch list. She said she will share with the Board once the list is finalized. Member Tedder-Loffland asked whether the list would be on their Facebook and Member Buthod said the list will be on their website. Chairman Menzie requested Staff to put the information on the City website as well.

Staff said there will not be an annual Earth Day Event this year, but instead a Big Clean-up Event on April 10th beginning at 8:30 a.m., at Sutton, Ruby Grant, Andrews, and Reaves Parks. Member Tedder-Loffland said she felt holding off on the Photo Contest until Earth Day 2022 would be best at this time. Mr. Vermillion said a virtual Arbor Day Celebration is scheduled for March 11th at 10:00 a.m.

ITEM 7, being:

ADJOURNMENT

Member Tedder-Loffland made the motion and Member Pape seconded to adjourn. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chairman Menzie and Members Buthod, Fagin, Janaway, Pape, Spain and Tedder-Loffland

NAY: None

Passed and approved this 5th of April 2021

Don Menzie, Chairperson

