

Owatonna Shade Tree Commission
West Hills Admin. Bldg.
April 9, 2019

PRESENT: Jon Simon, Jim Linder, Lowell Schultz, Roger E. Warehime, Laue Fransen, Roger Wacek and Gary Schwartz STAFF: Brad Rademacher, Brad Schroht

The meeting was called to order by President Roger Wacek at 5:31 pm.

Roger commented on several items regarding trees that are on city property and have suffered storm damage from September, 2018.

He also noted that Owatonna has been declared the 40th city in Minnesota as a Pollinator City. He suggested that pollinator plants be added to existing and future city rain gardens. He plans to submit comments to the Owatonna City Council regarding the conversion of the two rain gardens at the Owatonna Public Library. He will suggest they be redesigned to accommodate pollinator plants, shrubs and trees. This new area should be protected from mowing by a line of retaining wall blocks. Further, he will suggest the term 'Stormwater Retention Pond' be changed to 'Pollinator Rain Garden.'

The agenda was approved as printed.

The minutes of the October 9, 2018, meeting were approved.

Owatonna City comments/report – Brad Rademacher

Brad reported on the plans for the Arbor Day event on April 26 at noon in front of West Hills Admin. Bldg. There are 11 retirees and each will have a tree planted in their honor on city property. (These trees will not be on private property or boulevards.) The public is invited to participate.

There was very little progress this winter on updating the city-wide tree inventory.

A Summer Intern was hired but took a job in another county. The process will begin again this week.

We hope to have them work on tree inventory as part of their job. All our previous interns have been pursuing a college program in Civil Engineering.

City Forester Report/comments – Brad (Shorty) Schroht

Ash trees in parks and boulevards that look badly will be taken down this summer. Six have been taken down already this spring.

Stearns County (St. Cloud) has been added to the list of counties infected with Emerald Ash Borer. No firewood can be moved out of these areas.

Wacek commented that placing trees on narrow boulevards will eventually cause heaving of sidewalks and even curbs. The width of boulevards should be considered with replanting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Emerald Ash Borer update – EAB has not yet been detected in Steele County. However, it is probably here and may be detected this summer when trees begin to leaf-out.

There was general discussion of using goats to hinder the spread of Buckthorn. Volunteers have done some buckthorn removal in Kriesel and Hammann Park. They cut the Buckthorn, then sprayed it with a Roundup type chemical. Larger stumps may still sucker new sprouts.

NEW BUSINESS

Storm Cleanup of trees/debris from Sept., 2018, is mostly done. Crews working this week on S. Cedar.

Suggestion was made that we might be able to use an Eagle Scout candidate, Scout Troops or Explorer Scouts to assist with the city-wide tree inventory.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,    

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at 5:30 in West Hills Administration Bldg.