

Owatonna Shade Tree Commission
West Hills Arts Center
October 8, 2019

PRESENT: Chuck Newgard, Jim Linder, Lowell Schultz, Roger E. Warehime, Roger Wacek and Gary Schwartz STAFF: Brad Rademacher, Brad Schroht

GUEST: Jesse Wilker – Owatonna Park and Recreation – Parks Director

The meeting was called to order by President Roger Wacek at 5:30 pm.

The agenda was approved as printed.

The minutes of the April 9, 2019, meeting were approved.

Owatonna City comments/report – Brad Rademacher
City Forester Report/comments – Brad (Shorty) Schroht
Owatonna Park and Recreation – Parks Director, Jesse Wilker

These three people updated the Shade Tree Commission (STC) on developments regarding the Emerald Ash Borer discovery in Medford earlier this summer. Steele County is now in EAB Quarantine – no hard wood may be moved out of the county.

The City of Owatonna has budgeted \$20,000 in 2019 and \$20,000 in 2020 to address EAB. The city has also applied for a \$100,000 grant. We will know if the grant has been awarded later this fall. The first goal of the grant will be to finish the tree inventory for the city and especially the parks. It is now about 50% completed. This work can be completed this winter. However, we estimate there are 1000+ Ash Trees in the city parks – primarily Brooktree, Jaycee, Brown, Manthey and Gainey.

A portion of the grant can be used for equipment to treat trees with EAB infection. It can also be used to purchase equipment to remove trees, chip them and dispose of them. The STC discussed possible sites where infected trees and chips could be hauled/stored and possibly burned. The city has a 10-Acre site just west of town where this might occur.

The chemical that could be used to treat Ash trees is Mectinite. It will cost \$40-50/application for an 18- inch diameter tree, but it will last up to three years. This chemical is NOT harmful to bees and other pollinators.

There was discussion about trees in utility line corridors. RWarehime reported that the Owatonna Public Utilities has been aggressive in addressing this for several years. Some lines have been buried.

Caron Tree Service has purchased a kiln to heat-treat split wood, thereby making it saleable to the public at retail outlets. It could also be used in MN State Parks.

Rainbow Tree is one company that has shown interest in working with the city to address the EAB problem. They are a large company headquartered in the Twin Cities.

The STC also discussed the need to locate trees for replacement of the infected Ash trees. The city has a nursery of about 400 trees available right now. There are plans to plant at least 150 more in the nursery next spring.

The members of the STC were pleased and impressed with the work of the city employees to begin to solve the EAB crisis.

RWacek reported on the need to inform private homeowners about participating and complying with the quarantine. He also circulated a map of proper tree planting requirements for new trees. Three requirements were noted;

- 1) Visibility – especially at corners for traffic safety,
- 2) Distance from curb (or centerline of street),
- 3) Sidewalk setbacks.

His intention is to circulate this to the city council and urge actions to correct the problems.

GSchwartz reported on seven Izaak Walton members and 19 OHS students who cut up and removed several trees from Hammann Park on Tuesday. One of these was an Ash tree that had fallen in recent storms.

There was no Unfinished or New Business.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Gary M. Schwartz
The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 13, 2020.