

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE MUNICIPAL TREE BOARD

Thursday, June 11, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the City of Santa Fe Municipal Tree Board, a subcommittee of the Parks and Open Space Advisory Commission, was called to order by Patrick Torres, Chair on this date at approximate 3:30 pm at Frenchy's Barm. Corner of Osage and Agua Fria, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL. Roll call did indicate a quorum as follows:

Members Present: Patrick Torres, Chair, Tracy Neal, Sandra Taylor, Katherine O'Brien

Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Parks Division Director

Others Present: Mary Schruben of Neighborhood Association and Gayle Bechtel, of Railyard Steward and Long Range Planning

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ms. Taylor moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Neal seconded the motion, on the condition of tabling 6a under new business, as Robert Wood wasn't present to present the Tree Campus USA topic.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – May 14, 2015

Mr. Neal moved to approve the minutes, on the condition of deleting the reference to Mr. Thompson as Rusty. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Discussion of step 1 of the Tree Inventory, Train the Trainer, which was held at Ragle Park on May 23, 2015 with Municipal Tree Board members Mr. Neal, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. O'Brien present as well as Ms. Schruben, and Craig Campbell, a Santa Fe Landscape Architect. Mr. Thompson lead the May 23rd training and gave his summary of lessons learned from the training. The format he chose for the tree inventory is based upon the Massachusetts Street Tree Inventory. Aerial photos from Google or Santa Fe County Livar will be used to develop tree locations. The decision was made to develop each park into quadrants. Botanical names of trees, using Genus and species is preferred, with the closest common name being used if the Genus species is unknown. The DBH method, the tree trunk diameter at breast height, will be used to measure trees. Also to be noted on tree inventory form is the tree condition, suggested maintenance including clearance issues and suggested pruning or removal, and recommendations for additional trees.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the lessons learned from the initial Train the Trainer. Recommended additions to the tree inventory kit are as follows: a compass, markers, plastic bags, pruners, a knife, and trash bags. Some of the additional items

were deemed necessary to allow taking a tree sample, when unable to identify tree at the site. At the Train the Trainer tree inventory, a 6' sewing tape was used, which proved inadequate for bigger trees. Mr. Thompson stated that a "D" tape will be used in future inventories. Ms. Schruben requested that an additional category of check regularly, possible hazard tree be added to the inventory sheet. Other recommended changes to the inventory sheet were adding planting depth, and a medium condition to the comment section. Teams of three should be used for taking the tree inventory: a measurer, a looker, and a recorder. Mr. Thompson concluded that the initial inventory participants had come up with great ideas for modifying the inventory form. The City has yet to migrate the data gleaned from the first inventory into ACCESS, the website mobile application which will be used to record data. Ms. Taylor inquired if the City intend to grow their own data set. Mr. Thompson replied that the I-Tree data set can be modified for usage. The information can then be migrated into ACCESS for online information storage. Ms. Bechtel suggested that information could be put on GIS. She inquired if the City has a person to load the information. Mr. Thompson explained the City is currently undergoing the hiring of an interim clerk-typist who could accomplish this task. Mr. Thompson stated that he felt good about the Tree Inventory kick-off. The Train the Trainer session had good trainers. The need now is to recruit volunteers.

The leaders of inventory teams will choose inventory locations, which will comprise of city parks and public spaces. Ms. Taylor inquired if the inventory will include the plaza? Ms. Bechtel was interested in tree inventory of city trails. Mr. Thompson replied that the extent of the inventory will depend upon the number of volunteers. Inviting the media to an inventory event could help spawn volunteer participation. Ms. Bechtel suggested that the tree inventory events be more public, such as being listed on an on-line calendar. Ms. Bechtel also inquired about counting trees in the acequias. The question arose about counting groves of naturalized elm trees. Mr. Thompson explained a technique for tree stand delineation. He also suggested that the municipal tree board encourage the removal of invasive, exotic trees such as elms. Ms. Taylor inquired as to burial place of Clyde Tingley. Ms. Bechtel noted that she clips off elm starts wherever she goes.

Mr. Neal asked: "Where do we go from here?" Is there a plan to finish Ragle Park? Mr. Thompson again noted that the choice is up to the volunteers. The inventory group could either finish Ragle Park or move on to other parks. Ms. Schruben suggested a data trial run for the park GIS and then make a presentation of the data.

Mr. Thompson cautioned that the diversity of the urban forest is not in most parks. Exclusively park data would misrepresent what is in Santa Fe. Ms. Bechtel inquired if the goal was to map the whole city? Mr. Thompson stated that the goal of the tree board and the Department of Parks & Recreation is to inventory the urban spaces and trails. Then the information would be presented to the governing body with the recommendation that money be allotted for a tree inventory to be done by professionals, for more accurate information on the quality and diversity of tree species. The estimated cost of a professional tree inventory was stated as \$200/acre. Mr. Thompson suggested that it would be a good idea to know the cost of a professional tree survey in Santa Fe. Information gleaned from this first inventory by volunteers would help justify city department actions such as hiring an urban forester, establishing a nursery, etc. The inventory information could have a number of outcomes, including wanting more diversity and more citizens caring about the urban forest.

Ms. Taylor asked if the information from the first inventory, such as pruning, plants too deep, hazard trees, replacement requests, if this information going to be followed up on. Mr. Thompson said yes, the maintenance column in the first inventory coding sheet will be read and dealt with. City money for maintenance is limited, as the City has 3 new parks comprising hundreds of acres, with no increase in budget. The city plans to plant some new trees in the fall. Ms. Taylor noted that Russian Olives are not a good tree. Mr. Neal said that both aesthetically pleasing trees and hazard trees need to be identified. Mr. Thompson said that the inventory coding will formalize codes, such R1,R2 and P1, P2, P3 to provide this information.

Ms. Bechtel commented that crowd source data is questionable. Mr. Thompson replied that the I-Tree is well designed. Contract tree surveys are being used for the evaluation of the urban forest, such as storm quality, air quality data. There are huge mathematical models.

Ms. Bechtel inquired if the Municipal Tree Board seeks many volunteers to perform the inventory. Mr. Thompson thought that the number of volunteers would grow exponentially. Ms. Bechtel wondered about a public invitation. Mr. Thompson warned against a public invitation, as the tree board may receive many more volunteers than they can use. The board needs to decide how fast it will move. The present tree inventory is completely volunteer.

Ms. Taylor recommended the inventory of the plaza trees. She also recommended contacting David Chacon at the New Mexican, as he is a big supporter of parks. City councilor, Patti Bushee, should also be contacted. The consensus was that the tree board needs to bring the pieces together; get the tree inventory organized. Mr. Neal recommended doing a second inventory in August. Ms. Schruben thought that Phedra, another reporter at the New Mexican, should also be contacted.

Mr. Thompson wanted these questions answered: "How long will the inventory take? How will we proceed?" Ms. Schruben asked how many data entry clerks for this project. The answer was one. The suggestion was made to also inventory the Railyard Park. Mr. Torres added that Railyard stewards could be used to inventory. Mr. Thompson showed preference for little media coverage of the inventory at this point. The tote sheets should be completed with the information placed online. Ms. Schruben recommended contacting neighborhood associations for volunteers, as they have a vested interest in the trees in their community. She also recommended contacting Lisa Randall, the energy conservation person for Santa Fe Public Schools. She has an existing program involving sophomores in science related projects.

Mr. Neal emphasized the need for usable data, such as a positive identification of each tree and its condition. He questioned how quickly the tree board could expand the inventory and how many qualified people could be found to help. He noted that he himself was not often available on weekends, as that is when his landscape projects are installed. Mr. Neal wondered where the data on city park plantings for the last ten years is stored, as the information from park plans would be helpful in identifying new and unusual cultivars. Mr. Thompson said that the Public Works Department is currently amassing shop drawings of parks.

Mr. Torres recommended that the board schedule a new training with more people at Ragle Park. For volunteers, people working in the green industry could be contacted, as well as the Master Gardeners and the Railyard Stewards. Ms. O'Brien suggested that each board member contact people they know, with the goal of having an increase of 6-8 more volunteers. Ms. Bechtel suggested creation of a laminated ID manual.

After some discussion, the date for the next Train the Trainer at Ragle Park was set for July 19 at 8 am. Mr. Neal asked Mr. Thompson if he would have the training materials ready by then. Mr. Thompson said the inventory kits would be complete.

He would also have maps in quadrants and tree ID cards. Some discussion ensued about the use of smart phones apps for tree identification.

6b. NEW BUSINESS – Quality of Life Fund and Municipal Forestry

Discussion of how funds from the Quality of Life, gross receipts tax were used. Mr. Thompson presented a chart showing budgets for Service Contract, Rep. Maintenance of grounds and roads, and registration. He state that budgeted monies can be moved from one category to another. The bulk of the money under Service Contract (\$25,000) goes to Coates Tree Service for high aerial work and take downs. \$19,000 is allocated for prairie dog removal. Two community organizations, the Sierra Club and P-Dogs (a non-profit of Taos) may take over prairie dog control for the City.

\$5900 is budgeted for Arbor Day, Earth Day, and other community events. Some of the money is used to buy trees to give to the public. Information on planting and maintenance is given along with the trees. \$21,660 is budgeted for re-forestation of the Santa Fe urban forest. Mr. Thompson commented that the department received the same amount of money last year, and did not use it all. \$1075 is budgeted for registration for city workers to attend NMRPA, the New Mexico Recreation Park Association's yearly seminar. Mr. Thompson said that the NMRPA training assists the city department in creating a road map for the future. The department requires a \$50,000 investment to create a parks master plan.

7, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Thompson announced that a Pest Management Coordinator for the City of Santa Fe will be hired.

This meeting is Sandra Taylor's last meeting of the Municipal Tree Board. Patrick Torres has decided to stay on the board through the end of the year so to not create two vacancies at the same time. With Ms. Taylors's departure, there are currently two vacant positions on the Municipal Tree Board.

9. DATE AND TIME of next meeting:

The consensus was no board meeting will need to be held in July. The next meeting was therefore scheduled for Tuesday, August 11 at 3:00 pm.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

