

TREE BOARD – City of Columbia City

July 16, 2024 – 6:00pm

MINUTES

- Roll Call (Present) Janice Daniel, Jeff Bleijerveld, Brent Bockelman, Larry Walter, Chip Hill, Jennifer Romano, Bryan Smethers (Absent) Martha Acres
- We were privileged to have the Mayor attend and participate in our meeting.
- President Janice Daniel called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the June minutes. Larry made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Janice. A vote was taken; all voted “aye”.

OLD BUSINESS

- Financial Update
 - A report was not required at this time.
- Report on Arbor Day Tree Planting
 - Jennifer will forward photos to the rest of the board members of the tree planting at Faith Christian Academy
- Update on Tree Board Member Guidelines
 - The purpose is to further define what is expected of a tree board member i.e., attendance at meetings, participation in events and assisting in board directed tasks.
 - Currently there are guidelines provided in Ordinance 38.
 - Attendance or participation requirement changes would need to be a revision to the existing ordinance.
 - If a member is not meeting the requirements, it should be reported to the appointed body – mayor’s office or council.
 - Rules and procedures can be established by the tree board, presented to new members and reviewed annually at the first meeting of each calendar year.
 - The mayor will get back to us with some recommendations and next steps concerning procedure.
- Radio Road Project
 - The project is going to the county council for final approval. Part of the project includes the tree board adding additional trees to the project i.e., shade trees along the trail
- “Huggy the Tree”

- Huggy the Tree is a tree costume we have purchased from special events. It was received and will be used at events like First Fridays, tree plantings and Arbor Day activities.

NEW BUSINESS

- Date for Tree Planting
 - Jeff will remain in touch with Tegtmeyer regarding opportunity to purchase their remaining trees at a discount as we did in 2023.
 - Moved (Brent) If we are able to purchase the trees at the same discount we received the previous year, we will conduct a planting event in the Hanna Extended Neighborhood in September. Seconded by Jennifer. Carried
- Updates on Grants – Chip Hill
 - We have applied for a \$72,000 grant which requires \$6000 for tree planning and the remainder can be used for trees.
 - If we receive the grant, we will contract the planting with the purchase.
- Tree Planting Ordinance for New Builds
 - Currently, builders are required to plant a tree in the front yard of new builds. However, we would rather they plant the right of way, and that the tree be a deciduous shade tree rather than an ornamental or conifer
 - A formal request to the Planning Commission would be required in order to make changes
 - We will discuss further at our next meeting.
- Certified Arborist
 - Larry brought us an update. Seth Slabaugh of Albion has been approached and would be interested. He is currently completing specific training in risk assessment. We have had dealings with him in the past and they have been favorable. We will request a list of his qualifications, a proposed fee schedule, and ask that he attend our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12pm.

Submitted by Jeff Bleijerveld, Secretary