

## **TREE BOARD – City of Columbia City**

March 18, 2025 – 6:00pm

### **MINUTES**

- Roll Call (Present) Janice Daniel, Jeff Bleijerveld, Brent Bockelman, Larry Walter, Jennifer Romano, Bryan Smethers, Dan Knuth (Absent) Chip Hill
- President Janice Daniel called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the February minutes. Brent made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Larry. A vote was taken; all voted “aye”.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Financial Update
  - We’ll get a complete update next month when Chip Hill returns from vacation but some of our funds were used in the purchase of a new chainsaw.
- Revisit New Build Ordinance and Tree List
  - Chip and Brent have yet to meet to work on this item.
  - It was discussed that the tree list would not be part of an ordinance, but an addendum that we could edit periodically without the need to amend the ordinance itself.
- Tree Trimming
  - Three trees at JLS Sales were cut down within the past month. They were planted 10 years ago within the city easement and were not marked for removal. Janice will follow up with the owner.
  - All the trees we had scheduled for removal have been taken down.
- Tree Board Attire
  - Board funding will provide for the art set up and one t-shirt for each board member. If members desire additional attire, they can visit Running Around and purchase additional items.
- Door Hangers
  - Mark Espich is working on a sample which we will be forward to members in the coming weeks for consideration.
  - It was suggested we leave space to write with a Sharpie the tree species for the homeowner’s information.
  - The quote is on 500 hangers.
  - We will be sure to have the Tree City USA logo on the hanger

## NEW BUSINESS

- Tree Planting Sites for 42 Trees
  - Chip will send out notices to locations we decided on last month as soon after he returns from vacation as possible.
- Arbor Day Celebration Plans April 25
  - Teachers are interested in doing something with the second-grade classes.
  - A tree will be planted in a location they would select – preferably a shade tree from our tree list.
  - Janice will dig the hole for the tree, and contact the mayor regarding a proclamation.
  - If teachers are interested in the donation of books about trees from our list for their library, Jeff will order the trees and have them on hand for presentation.
  - Huggy the Tree will be on hand.
- First Friday – May 2
  - Brent will be dressed as Huggy.
  - Janice will bring the Tree ID set up.
  - Jennifer will print stickers.
  - Jeff will provide the canopy if rain threatens.
  - A TreeKeeper map of where we do and don't have trees will be printed and be available for people to see.
- Memorial Tree Planting
  - We renewed the discussion regarding the opportunity for mourners to donate funds through funeral homes to a memorial fund in memory of loved ones which would be used to plant trees in Columbia City.
  - Janice presented an example of a card people could receive to acknowledge a donor's gift.
  - We need to discuss our interest in setting up this fund with the city to find out how we would receive the funds before approaching the funeral homes.
  - Jennifer will contact Rosie to make the inquiry.
- City Tree Replacements
  - **A motion was then made to leave to the discretion of Janice Daniel the species of trees used to replace city trees. (Moved by Brent, seconded by Dan, carried)**
  - There was discussion regarding the planting Ivory Silk Lilacs in the downtown area.
- Seth Slabaugh – City Tree Arborist
  - An assessment of all our city trees has been completed.
  - The biggest problem with diseased trees is a result of improper pruning.
  - Our young trees are doing well with the exception of the choke cherries.
  - The choke cherries on Main St (IN 9) are in terrible shape and need to be replaced. We start by pruning the worst affected by a common fungal blight. Dan volunteer to take on this task.

- We will replace all the trees at some point in the near future to improve the appearance of this important access to our city from US 30.
  - Mid-sized trees could use trimming at this stage to encourage proper growth and shape before trimming is more likely to damage the tree.
  - Seth will present the city with an invoice for the work he has completed which we agreed should be for considerably more than the \$1500 he estimated.
  - Everyone expressed their appreciation of his work and an interest in continuing to employ his services as our city arborist.
- Hidden Power of Trees
    - Larry shared an article from the Nature Conservancy that he encouraged us each to read.
    - Also, TreeKeeper has been caught up and reports can be run on any kind on information.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm**

Submitted by Jeff Bleijerveld, Secretary