

Morgantown Tree Board (MTB)
Minutes, meeting of January 22, 2018

Present: MTB members Dan Brown, Phil Crim, Greg Dahle, Dave Davis, Donna Marie Foster, Ken Hacker (MUB), Secretary Jon Weems, and Chair Dave Barnett, City Council liaison Rachel Fetty via conference call, City employee Marchetta Maupin, and guest Matt Cummins (Mon Power/First Energy).

D. Barnett opened the meeting at 4:31 PM in the Public Safety Building conference room and noted that a quorum was present.

J. Weems moved, and D. Brown seconded, that the minutes of the September 25, 2017 meeting be approved as amended. The motion carried unanimously. D. Barnett moved, and J. Weems seconded, that the minutes of the November 27, 2017 meeting be approved as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Report from M. Maupin. M. Maupin distributed invoices from Bartlett Tree Experts for work on the very large slippery elm on Conner St. behind Mario's Fishbowl. "Advanced assessment" in December cost \$720. Pruning, cabling, and related work in January cost \$3300. Mark Furfari of Mario's sent a letter of thanks to M. Maupin that included a donation to the Tree Board. M. Maupin reported the English ivy in large sycamores on Ashland St. still looks vigorous and may need to be cut again. She distributed copies of a \$5325 estimate from Mitchell Tree Care for pruning and other work on City trees at various locations, the largest component being \$1400 for pruning of pines and an oak at the Wiles Hill Community Center playground. She expected Mitchell would also assess an unsightly crabapple at the Chestnut St. mini-park. She noted that the Urban Landscape budget request for the next fiscal year includes funding for a part-time City Forester. She said she was working on Tree City USA and Demonstration City grant applications.

Unfinished business

1. Memorial Tree Policy. D. Barnett said the Urban Landscape Commission (ULC) was reviewing its entire gift and memorial policy. He and the rest of the Tree Board agreed it would be good to coordinate to be sure the ULC and MTB policies were in harmony. It was tentatively agreed to seek a joint meeting, perhaps in the week of Feb. 19. In related matters, D. Brown led a discussion of an Australian policy of planting a tree for each birth; R. Fetty suggested a Woodburn woman eager to plant a memorial tree might buy one, in coordination with MTB, rather than wait for resolution of the memorial policy issue; and D. Barnett noted that donors should receive notes for income tax deduction purposes when charitable deductions are possible.
2. FY 2018-2019 Budget Review. MTB members agreed the draft budget request circulated by D. Barnett accurately reflected the MTB consensus and looked good.
3. Recommendation to Hire a City Forester/Arborist. Both the proposed MTB budget and the proposed ULC budget called for the hiring of a part-time City forester/arborist. No person present knew if BOPARC had yet written a letter of support for the new position. G. Dahle stressed the importance of agreeing on a job title. MTB members expected the position might entail more management, coordination, and database work than hands-on

tree work, so the term “Arborist” might be inappropriate. G. Dahle indicated a preference for either “Urban Forester” or “City Forester.” A consensus emerged that the job title should be “City Forester.” D. M. Foster reported she had communicated with Susan Day of the USDA Forest Service, who had studied urban forestry job descriptions and found many were outdated and failed to accurately describe current duties. MTB members expressed confidence they could create an appropriate job description.

New Business

1. Planting Date for Deckers Creek. After brief discussion, D. Barnett said he would call Holly Purpura (Friends of Deckers Creek) to set up a time to plant remaining sycamore, redbud, etc. seedlings this spring.
2. City Lot off of Woodland Rd. M. Maupin expressed a desire for MTB to help assess this lot donated to the City. She reported large trees and rampant poison ivy at the site. A March or April visit was suggested. Further discussion resulted in the idea of posting advice on dealing with poison ivy, perhaps via links on the MTB web page.

Open Discussion. M. Cummins reported that Mon Power/First Energy had scheduled 2018 power line maintenance work in Suncrest, near Krepps Park. Most other work anticipated in Monongalia County was outside the City limits. R. Fetty expressed frustration that a tree hung up in wires on Board of Education property near Alison and Waitman Streets had yet to be removed. She reported that SB 270 (under consideration) included language that could enable timber harvesting from state parks. J. Weems reported vandalism to a newly plated maple on High St.

Next meeting TBD, hopefully a joint meeting with the Urban Landscape Commission in February.

Motion to adjourn made at 5:53 PM by D. Brown, seconded by G. Dahle. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted, _____ Jon Weems, Secretary