

TREE BOARD MEETING MINUTES 7/26/22

Roll Call:

1. Cindy Kirchberg-Chair
2. Jon Foster-Arborist
3. Sonya Dailey
4. Cindy Yager
5. Charlene Klein-Mayor
6. Susan Cardiff

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by Jon and seconded and approved by Sonya.

ITEM #1:

Jon Foster Arborist Report / White River Tree Plantings & Clean-Up: General Discussion

Jon talked to Tom, the Director of Public Works, about the budget for trees. Tom told him to go through the Park Board and to the committee that would deal with this item, and then let the Park Board approve the expenditure for replanting. Jon said the cost for replacement of the trees was estimated at \$10,000 and could be \$15,000 depending on the number of trees needed. It doesn't help that the cost to purchase trees is also increasing.

The board agreed that there needs to be more money in the budget for trees and landscaping, for replacing damaged or dead trees, and for basic upkeep and maintenance of our trees and green spaces. Jon also reported that evergreens are showing signs of needle damage throughout the area.

The Frisbee Park was cleaned up over the winter, thanks to a lot of hard work. Jon wanted to purchase 30 trees at \$250 each, for a total of \$5,000 for this year and get them purchased and planted. Planting native wildflowers along the riverbanks was also discussed. The plants would help hold the soil and prevent erosion. Jon would like to seed along the river with tall fescue if it's native and not invasive to our area. Ultimately, the goal is to clean up the river and make it nice again.

Sonya mentioned two sources for native wildflower seed mixes, Agrical and RES, formerly known as AES. Discussion revolved around the cost, what type of seed mix, flooding concerns, and ability to burn if needed. Cost estimate for 10# of seed could be \$1,000.

Jon reported that there are four culverts that are controlled by the White River Group, and they are all rotting. The culverts were put in at the north end of the river by the access road 50 years ago. One has collapsed from the bottom up. The group that owns Hillmoor also own this portion of the river. If it collapses entirely, it could cause flooding.

Bridge #3 is on the list to be replaced. The perches were washed out and damaged several years ago, and one of the I beams is in the river. This needs to be removed when the water level is low. It was also reported that the engineering work was almost done, and then Bridge 1 and 3 can be taken out.

ITEM #2: How Do We Keep Our Trees Healthy and Protect Them from Further Stress & Damage?

The board discussed ways to ensure that any new trees that are planted will be watered and taken care of...but by Whom?

1. The recent Stone Ridge tree planting was poorly done, and the 100 planted trees are not being watered. What can the board do to encourage people to water their trees??
2. New trees should get 30-40 gallons of water per week, according to Jon. Can we talk to Homeowners Associations? Spread the word or make signs that say, "WATER ME PLEASE!" We are not charged for water, because it is taken out of the hydrants.
3. All new trees are being staked on both sides. Bigger trees come with ball & burlap.
4. The board discussed purchasing wrought iron tree protectors to combat vandalism and damage to our downtown trees. Jon will look up prices and email us the information. Depending on the style and design, the protectors could cost \$1,500-\$3,000.
5. Sonya suggested contacting local high school welding departments to see if the students could fabricate wrought iron tree protectors that would be much more reasonable.
 - a. Cindy Yager will contact Badger and Delavan high schools.
 - b. Sonya will contact Elkhorn and Gateway schools.

Tree Budget Estimate: Mayor Klein said to ask for \$30,000 for all of the above.

ITEM #3: Park Board Budget/Shortage of Workers

The next Park Board meeting is 8/16/22. Budgets will be due by the end of August. The acute shortage of available and willing workers is taking a heavy toll on the existing staff and their ability to keep up with the workload. That led to a discussion about contacting Gateway to see if they have forestry programs. I've included this information on their website:

*With an **Arboriculture/Urban Forestry Technician associate degree** from Gateway, the great outdoors will be your workspace as you use your knowledge of natural resources and cutting-edge industry technology to care for trees in an urban environment. Become an arborist or urban forestry technician through hands-on, outdoor learning. Discover how to manage tree health, diversity and the sustainability of an urban tree population to better care for your local environment.*

ITEM #4: South Street Grant Update/Background Information/Tree Campaign

The city of Lake Geneva got a grant in 2015 to do this South Street Trail project. There were public information meetings in 2017 & 2018, and again in 2021 and 2022, but no public input meeting that allowed residents to voice their opinions and concerns. The multi-use path, or “trail” is currently slated to be a 10’ wide asphalt “sidewalk” that runs from Badger High School along South Street to South Shore Drive, along the north side of the road. At least 40 trees (including shrubs and small trees) will be taken down, and property owners may lose large portions of their front yards to accommodate the sidewalk and right-of-way restrictions. Completion of the path is slated for 2024.

The meeting was adjourned sometime between 5:30 and 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Cardiff
8/7/22