



CITY OF UNIVERSITY CITY
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION
May 16, 2012
Community Center, 975 Pennsylvania
7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members present: Ted Slegesky, Jack Breier, Nancy Solodar, Anu Hittle, Linda Fried
Guest: Richard Wilson Public Works and Parks Director

1. Citizen sign up.
2. Commission President Ted Slegesky introduced the members of the commission stated the purpose of special meeting and rules of procedure. Anyone wishing to speak before the council must sign in; every one will have 5 minutes of time allotted to speak, after citizen comments that portion will be closed. Then the commission will have a discussion after that they will vote.

3. Appeal of 1343 Coolidge

- a) Citizen Comments: Linda Conner 1343 Coolidge spoke requesting removal of the city street tree in front of her residence so she could grow a lawn.

Citizen Comments closed

- b) Commission discussion: Anu requested information on the age and health of the tree. James stated the tree to be approximately 50 years old and in excellent health. Follow up question from Anu asking if it is against city ordinance to remove a live, healthy city tree, and would this set precedence? James answered yes to both questions. Ted and other commission members stated they have viewed the tree and area and feel that other residences in the neighborhood have large trees and are able to grow a lawn.
- c) Commission vote: Ted requested a vote from the commission, Linda so motioned, Nancy second. Ted instructed the commission that a yes vote overturns the decision by the city forester and a no vote affirms the decision. A vote was taken and the commission members voted no on the appeal.

4. Appeal Greenway South

- a) Citizen Comments: A large number of citizens spoke to this issue, because of the large number of speakers I will summarize each position accordingly and I would suggest reading the minutes of May 9, 2012. Those that spoke against the city forester's decision to remove the trees made these points:
 - 1) The trees are mature and thriving and it will take years for new trees to grow large enough to replace them.
 - 2) There will be a terrible runoff and erosion problem with rain water.
 - 3) There is no need to widen the path to 10'. Bike paths on Washington University side are not 10', and the bridge over Forest Park Parkway is not 10' wide.
 - 4) Don't trust Washington University to uphold their end of the deal
 - 5) Worried about the effect removing the trees will have on the trees on private property.
 - 6) Feel blackmailed by the city forester to accept the proposal in an effort to get trees removed and replaced at no cost to the city.

Those that spoke for the city forester's decision made these points:

- 1) Sweet Gum is not a desirable tree along a walking and biking path.
- 2) The project will not cost the city money.
- 3) We are removing 55 trees and receiving 80 more suitable trees and completely new soil.
- 4) The trees on the east side of the path have been butchered by Ameren UE they no longer provide the shade they once did. The trees on the west side because of poor soil and root restrictions are not thriving and are in poor shape.

Citizen Comments closed

- b) Commission discussion: Ted requested a motion to discuss, Anu so motioned, Jack second. The consensus among commission members was that the removal of the trees will look bad in the short run but, long term should be more appealing. Nancy pointed out the benefit of replacing the trees with more appropriate varieties. She also is favorable of replacing the soil and using a structural soil under the pathway. Linda worried about the overabundance of Sweet Gum had created a mono culture and thought this to be a great opportunity to plant more appropriate varieties. Anu agrees with widening the path and the bridge, she had also requested an estimate on what it would cost the city to remove the trees in house, this information provided by the city forester was approximately \$20,000.00. Anu stated she did not want to see the city face that expense, if the path was widened, without removing the trees. She also questioned as to whether the commission could not come up with some kind of compromise language. Jack agreed with Anu about leaving the burden of tree removal on the city and would also like some kind of compromise. Ted said the trees on the west side of the path are doomed and the trees on the east are as good as they will get due to Ameren pruning every year. The overall benefit to the city of new soil and new trees is greater than leaving the status quo.
- c) Commission vote: Anu motioned the commission come up with a compromise to the decision, Jack second.
- d) Commission motion:

We support the recommendation of the City Forester to remove trees on the Greenway for the widening of the dual purpose pathway, subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The trees on the east side be replaced as and when the need arises;
2. The monies for their removal and replacement be placed into the Tree Bank (as defined by Section 12.08.020 of the City Code), provided the Tree Bank is a functioning account out of which the City Forester can take funds and into which the project sponsors can place funds; the money shall be reserved for the express purpose of replacement of trees on the Greenway project;
3. The trees on the west side be removed and replaced as part of the plan for the widened path, including but not limited to the specifications laid out by the City Forester;
4. The water accumulation issues be addressed in a satisfactory manner by all neighbors and the City; we recommend the use of permeable surfaces and other appropriate green practices;
5. No trees will be removed pursuant to the project until binding contracts have been signed.

Ted requested a motion: Jack so motioned, Linda second.

Voted on and unanimously approved by: University City Urban Forestry Commission on May 16th, 201

5. Adjournment: Ted adjourned the meeting at 10pm

Submitted: James Crowe 7/11/12