

Franklin Tree Board
Minutes
June 17, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Fields at 6 PM at Franklin City Hall. Chairman Bill presented a flag and plaques proclaiming Franklin as a “Tree City USA” to Mayor Fred Paris. Mayor Paris expressed his pleasure of the actions of the Board and staff that has resulted in this proclamation.

In attendance were members Bill Fields, Greg Cantwell, Larry Nun, Chip Orner, and Debbie Swinehamer. Meg Jones was absent. Bill suggested possibly providing for a board position (regardless of residency) for a Franklin College representative. This idea was met with mixed reviews. He also noted that he has been in discussion with City Attorney, Rob Schafstall regarding our adherence to the Open Door Policy, especially as concerns the actions of the “Tree Board Designee”. He will further detail findings at the next meeting. Chip reiterated his comment from several months prior that he does not feel the need for a “designee” that the professional staff should be entrusted to make decisions as to required work.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after a motion by Larry and a second offered by Chip Orner. There were no Committee Reports except as noted under Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

Tree Inventory: Jim Farr reported that we should receive the preliminary I-Tree report in about two weeks. He noted that an application for grant money to conduct a total inventory will be due in July. Grants are then awarded in January of 2011.

Tree Removal/trimming Update: Jim reported that due to the severe weather we have experienced in the past week the crews have been busy removing storm damaged trees and brush.

Code Change/Update: Greg reported that he has incorporated the suggested updates to the existing code and feels that one more sub-committee meeting should wrap up details in order to print a complete suggested update to the document for action by the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Recently board members Larry Nun, Greg Cantwell and Debbie Swinehamer met with Steve Compton and Garnett Pierce, a representative of Asplundh Tree Service. The board members received explanations of requirements mandated by Duke Energy as well as seeing examples of suggested removals and trimmings suggested by the staff. The board members concurred with the suggested actions. The City Arborists were not along on the tour as they were still busy with storm damage.

Tree Board Member Replacement:

Bill introduced Scott Swartz of Swartz Funeral Home as an interested candidate for the open position on the Board. He was in the audience and confirmed his interest in serving. Gary Moody, also in attendance, was asked to reintroduce himself as a candidate. Bill noted that one other name that had been submitted was John Moore who resides in Windstar. He was not in attendance. Greg Cantwell made a motion to accept Scott Swartz as a member. Larry Nun seconded the motion which was approved.

Communication between the Tree Board and City Arborists:

Bill noted the creation of a group email address which is treeboard@franklin-in.gov which includes all Board Members and the Street Commissioner and two Arborists. This was created in hopes that all involved will keep abreast of news. Jim Farr submitted the Log Book which is currently used to record requests for work as well as follow-up actions. It was agreed that for now this record was deemed sufficient. We will see if the form can be incorporated into our web site.

Bob Schofield of East Madison Street was in attendance to commend the staff on their quick and efficient clean up of a tree on his property that was destroyed by a recent storm. He noted that one additional street tree on Madison is also in need of work. Bill will follow up on that request. Bill also congratulated the staff on their recent overtime efforts.

Jim Farr noted that the Indiana Urban Forest Council will conduct a seminar in Columbus on July 1 from 8 AM to 4 PM. Dr. Eleanor Ostrum will be the key speaker. Jim encouraged all Board Members to attend. Bill made a motion to pay the registration fee from the Tree Board budget for any Board Member desiring to attend. Greg seconded the motion which was approved. Jim also noted that DNR had recently conducted a training session for workers serving under City Arborists and that training was held in Franklin. Seven Franklin employees attended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Gary Moody suggested that Committee Reports be mandated. He also suggested that the Board set deadlines or timelines for work in process, such as the code update and that future meetings should be recorded with the audio system. He stated that he questioned the work done at 451 W. Madison Street. He questioned the opinion of Jim Farr. Jim was simply meeting with Cox Tree Service to secure an estimate for removal of trees on the south side of Madison Street. Gary also questioned work done by Brown's Tree Service. Gary noted the removal of two trees in front of Huntington Bank and questioned the removal of one tree and the sidewalk work at the corner of Walnut and Clark streets. Debbie stated that this location was one of those that were examined by Greg, Larry, Debbie, Steve Compton and Mr. Pierce from Asplundh and they had all approved of the efforts prior to the work being performed. The sidewalk was moved two feet away from the tree roots of one remaining tree and one tree did need to be removed due to decay and disease.

John Hawkins stated that he knows the owner of the white truck on Kentucky Street which was damaged by a falling limb during the recent storm. He said the owner had told him that only Steve Compton had said the tree needed to be removed but again Debbie confirmed that the tour group had view the situation and agreed in whole to the removal of the tree. John also disagreed with the clean-up process used by staff in this situation. Laurie Hawkins distributed handouts copied from industry publications to update Board Members on current “professional opinions”.

Bill offered a motion to adjourn. Larry seconded the motion which was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Swinehamer
Secretary