

MINUTES  
City of New Castle Tree Advisory Commission  
October 3, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.  
1 Municipal Boulevard

Members Present:     Judie Baldini  
                              Scot Savitch  
                              Carl Benson  
                              Wolcott Davis

Absent:                 Sheila Shannon, Chair

Also Present:         Furio Casale, Code Enforcement Officer  
                              Ron Vukelich  
                              Norman Lehr, Gateway Garden Center

In Ms. Shannon’s absence, Ms. Baldini convened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

**Minutes**

A Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 12, 2022, meeting as presented was made, seconded, and unanimously carried.

**New Applications**

2022-0 – David Maijala – 167 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

An Application was submitted to approve (1) planting a Japanese Maple tree in a decorative wooden pot, and (2) removal of several dead trees on the path that are dropping large limbs.

Regarding item #1, the Commissioners determined that as the property owner has indicated that the tree he purchased will be planted in a wooden pot to be placed next to a fence, approval from the TAC is not necessary. Mr. Furio noted that Mr. Maijala indicated to him that he will not be planting a Japanese Maple tree and is unsure at this time what tree he will plant in the pot. The TAC will notify the property owner.

Regarding item #2, Mr. Casale opined that the location is on a path adjacent to a parking lot; but there are no trees in that location. He added that when he spoke with Mr. Maijala he did not mention the dead trees. Mr. Benson stated that he will contact Mr. Maijala for clarification of his request.

The City Stenographer called to the attention of the Commissioners that the Application appears to have an incorrect File Number, and she will confirm the correct File Number of the Application with Ms. Burgmuller.

### **Review of Past Tree Work Applications**

#### 2022-20 – Irene Briggs – 36 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street

Ms. Baldini contacted Ms. Briggs regarding her application and Ms. Briggs stated that at this time she is just trying to decide on an appropriate tree. She is considering a Red Bud or a London Plane, and would like input from the TAC.

It was noted that the area is under wires, and there is space for more than one tree to be planted. Mr. Vukelich suggested that the Red Bud would be an appropriate tree under the wires; and two to three trees would fill in the space nicely. Ms. Baldini will contact Ms. Briggs and suggest that she review the TAC Approved Tree List to help her make a final decision for the tree species to plant.

Mr. Vukelich suggested that Ms. Briggs' situation would be policy point that could be addressed on the City website. Ms. Baldini noted that topic is on the Agenda and would be discussed later in the meeting.

#### 2022-17 – Vivian Cameron – 158 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street

This Application was tabled at the September meeting. Mr. Savitch inspected the tree and stated that it needs to be trimmed. Mr. Casale added that the Application also requests that two large trees be removed due to branches being entwined in the wires and roots uplifting sidewalk bricks and damaging a garden wall; and the TAC wanted to have an arborist inspect them. Mr. Lehr stated that he had not yet inspected the tree.

Mr. Casale informed the Commissioners that he and Mr. Barthel met with Mr. Lehr, and it was agreed that Mr. Lehr would lend his expertise to the City and TAC regarding tree situations. Mr. Casale will give Application 2022-17 to Mr. Lehr for review.

#### 2022-16 – Sheila and Marty Shannon – 313 Delaware Street

Mr. Casale confirmed that TAC determined this tree would be trimmed and it was added to the City Tree List.

#### 2022-18 – Benjamin Ryan – 300 Delaware Street

Mr. Casale stated that the two trees were removed.

Ms. Baldini noted that all other past tree Applications have been resolved.

Mr. Vukelich reported on several other situations in town.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### Budget

Mr. Savitch reported that the TAC budget was \$19,000 and there is approximately \$16,000 left at this time. Mr. Casale noted that having the City do tree removal when they can is a substantial savings to the TAC.

Dewey Park

Mr. Casale noted that there are two dead trees on either side of the Monument on Market Street in Dewey Park on Trust property.

**Report From Ron Vukelich**

Block of 300 East – Randall Snyder – There is a dead tree on the sidewalk that was killed by chemicals that needs to come out. Mr. Vukelich recommended that TAC replace the tree.

Rod Gillespie – There is a dead tree at Mr. Gillespie’s house that should come out. Mr. Vukelich suggested that six trees could be planted in that area. Ms. Baldini recommended that TAC approach Mr. Gillespie and ask if he would consider helping to pay for a new tree.

4<sup>th</sup> Street – Sara Hutchinson – Mr. Vukelich noticed a Willow Oak is uplifting bricks. The tree is about 30’ x 25’, which is about 30-35% of its final size, and Mr. Vukelich suggested that it be removed. Mr. Casale will inspect the tree to see if the City can remove it and suggested that it be put on the City Tree List.

Cherry Tree – Beverly Flannigan – Mr. Vukelich noted that TAC approved removal of a Cherry tree quite some time ago and it has still not been removed.

UAME Church – West 5<sup>th</sup> Street – Mr. Vukelich suggested that a Cherry tree alongside the church be removed.

51 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street – Ms. Deptula – There is a Cherry tree at #49 that should be considered for removal.

Delaware Street – Six Spring Flurry’s will be planted between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets.

East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – Valrath – Mr. Lehr has four Summer’s Towers to replace the Autumn Brilliance that was damaged by leaf hoppers.

Ms. Baldini stated that the trees in Mr. Vukelich’s report need to be categorized and prioritized. Mr. Vukelich stated that no one is asking for these trees to be removed except Randall Snyder. He added that if the tree at UAME Church could come out trees could be put in along the grassy knoll.

**Public Comment**

Phil Gross

Mr. Gross thanked the TAC for plantings in the empty planters at the Wharf. Mr. Vukelich explained why the plantings had been removed in the first place, noting that it appears they are not being watered. Mr. Gross asked if the TAC could take on the task of watering those planters. Ms. Baldini stated that TAC has a tree focus at the present time, and taking on watering would take the TAC away from that focus; and watering is not within the purview of the TAC

### **TAC Members Comments and Discussions**

Ms. Baldini noted that TAC was to determine how the City website could be enhanced with tree information. Four items were discussed previously:

- A checklist to be used by TAC when inspecting trees;
- A more user friendly Tree Approval Form for resident use;
- A checklist for homeowners for reference when completing an Application; and
- An updated Approved Tree List.

Ms. Baldini opined that a Q&A and/or a set of FAQs on the website would be beneficial to both the residents and the TAC. Mr. Savitch suggested that a series of articles be published in The Weekly. Ms. Baldini noted that the TAC does not have a Mission Statement. It was agreed that the Commissioners would bring a list of Q&As and FAQs to the next TAC meeting.

Mr. Vukelich suggested that the Commissioners review websites of other small municipalities to see how they address their Tree Commissions.

Ms. Baldini recapped tasks for the next meeting:

- Review other municipalities' websites for ideas.
- Make a list of Q&As and FAQs.
- Bring ideas for a Mission Statement.
- Review the Approved Tree List.

In addition, Mr. Benson will consult with Messrs. Vukelich and Lehr and draft an article for The Weekly.

Mr. Savitch suggested that TAC keep track of street trees that are getting close to the wires to identify them for trimming. Mr. Casale noted that would be an easy task as soon as the Tree List is categorized and prioritized.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Baldini called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. On vote the Motion was unanimously carried and the meeting ended at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich  
City Stenographer