

February 19, 2008 Tree Commission Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:14

Present: Jim Larson, Margi Preus, Ethan Perry, Rick Gitar, Louise Levy, Rob Marohn
Absent: Christine Perry, Brian Allen, John Doberstein, Kelly Fleissner

January Minutes approved

Trees in the News

- Lake County land conservation deal
- Statistic reported of 60 acres of forest lost per minute worldwide
- Article on biomass ethanol, which is more efficient than corn. Jim mentioned that whole tree logging (which is used to produce biomass) could potentially deplete soil nutrients
- Wooden planter boxes distributed nationwide by Lowe's were recalled because they were made from ash from a part of Indiana under Emerald Ash borer quarantine.

Forester's Report

None

McQuade plantings

Jim will call DNR to see what planting plans are

St. Luke's Clinic

City Council voted 6 to 1 in support of zoning variance. Sharla Gardner was the only vote against. The Council put stipulations on development, including a forested buffer between the clinic and existing homes, which may make it difficult (or impossible?) to develop.

Rob discussed that this land was tax-forfeit and conveyed to the City for the purpose of a golf course (to north). Since the conveyance was for recreation, would it be illegal to develop it?

If development is going to go ahead, there are a couple ways to make lemonade out of lemons. Louise attended a web seminar recently about utilizing urban tree waste. The most important step is creating a market for the wood, particularly for local arts and crafts.

We could also ask St. Luke's to voluntarily follow the Tree Replacement Policy we have been developing. It could be a test case to see how it works.

Ethan made a motion that "the Tree Commission plans to ask St. Luke's to voluntarily follow the draft Tree Replacement Policy if a clinic is developed near the Lester River."

Louise seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. We don't yet know when or how we will approach St. Luke's.

Tree Ordinance

Ethan reported on edits made to the draft Tree Removal Permit application based on discussion at the last ordinance meeting on January 29.

Rob suggested we create a tri-fold pamphlet as a handout to explain our efforts to update the tree ordinance. Ethan will help Rob produce this.

Louise asked what is the outline of steps necessary to create a new ordinance. Ethan will dig out his notes on that.

Rick provided language explaining the requirements to qualify for a forestry level Tree Removal Permit.

Next tree ordinance meeting will be held March 11, 2008 at 7 p.m.

Sky Harbor Airport

Jim is our representative on a Public Advisory Committee convened by SEH Inc. on behalf of the Duluth Airport Authority. The committee meets (monthly?) to keep abreast of studies and decisions relating to the pine forest near the runway. With funding from Rep. Oberstar's office, SEH will complete an Environmental Assessment Worksheet in 1.5 to 2 years.

One possibility is to realign the runway by 3-5 degrees, so planes can approach from over the water, rather than through the forest. This would require significant expense to fill in part of the harbor and create a new runway. Temporarily the runway has been effectively shortened (by moving lights) in order to keep in compliance with FAA regulations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.