

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**June 10, 2019**  
**East Conference Room**

**Present:** Councilmembers Rader, Anderson, Bullock

**Also Present:** Councilmembers O'Leary and George, Mayor Summers, Chris Perry of the Urban Forestry Department, Assistant Law Director Jennifer Swallow, Clerk Maureen Bach, members of the former Tree Task Force (David Sangree, Marianne Quasebarth, John Palmer), and Deputy Clerk Lascu taking minutes.

**Call to Order:** 7:07 pm

**AGENDA:**

**Communication from Councilmembers Bullock & George regarding Tree Task Force recommendations & tree canopy. (Referred to Public Works 4/15/19)**

**Other tree topics to be discussed with City Forestry Division & former members of the Tree Task Force.**

Councilman Rader opened the meeting with introductions of those in attendance and with brief discussion on the resolution Council recently passed regarding a tree lawn tree planting program. He deferred to Chris Perry of Urban Forestry for an update on tree planting efforts.

Mr. Perry stated that his department has seen 9 people sign up for tree plantings on their private property and the program has been implemented thus far on a word of mouth basis, with a good deal of people on Blossom Park Ave. participating. These private property plantings increase the species options by 60%-70%.

Councilman Rader discussed developing some type of committee to further tree canopy development. Councilman Bullock noted the amount of progress made by the Urban Forestry department through planting on the public side of property lines and added that more than half of the goals proposed by the former tree task force will be accomplished largely by plantings on private property. A tree commission could enable the City to implement public education of private owners and spread information regarding various planting programs by word of mouth. Mayor Summers stated that he has a healthy respect for commissions and task forces, but is cautious about creating one for this issue as there is no clear deliverable. He said when we ask citizens to volunteer for a commission they must be given some form of authority and questioned what decision making a tree commission would do. He noted task forces are used to shape ideas and that the former tree task force did that successfully, as Mr. Perry's work in the Urban Forestry department has embodied many of the principles created by the former task force.

Bullock responded that the motivation behind creating a commission was for public education purposes. Rader noted that a task force works within a limited scope of time and that the committee should make sure it is assigning appropriate authority and deliverables as to not waste the time of citizen volunteers.

David Sangree of the former tree task force stated that there is a need for the commission, which formerly met under Keep Lakewood Beautiful (KLB). He said the proposed tree commission's goal can be expanding the city's tree canopy percentage coverage along with public education of homeowners. Councilman Anderson added a deliverable that the commission could provide and be responsible for is door to door outreach. Mr. Sangree stated that the city could be divided into sections and each member could door knock each one and cover the whole city in several years. He argued that the former tree task force did not have enough authority being under Keep Lakewood Beautiful. Mayor Summers questioned how the group defines authority. Sangree stated he is looking for the authority to encourage people to get trees. Marianne Quasebarth of the former tree task force spoke of her experience working as a KLB board member and head of the former tree task force, adding her belief that tree commission needs some authority so that the principles and programs implemented in recent years under Mayor Summers and Mr. Perry can continue beyond a change in administration or Council. She stated that the commission needs to have oversight authority for the 19 recommendations made by the former tree task force and that the commission could meet for quarterly reports with Mr. Perry. She expressed a need for a tree commission to be involved in the planning and development process. She spoke about rumors she heard regarding trees and tree lawns on Lake Ave. being removed for a bike path. Mayor Summers responded saying that the City is not getting rid of the tree lawns described on the north side of Lake Ave. Mr. Perry responded that the Planning Department already incorporates him in any aspect of tree decisions as part of the development process and that he would be shocked if the Lake Ave. tree lawns were ever to be altered.

John Palmer of the former tree task force stated that establishing a tree commission might give it authority by its own creation. Council President O'Leary stated that he tends to support the creation of a permanent group to help tree canopy development and would support it being separate from Keep Lakewood Beautiful, but struggles with the concept of authority and has trouble identifying barriers to the group accomplishing its goals now. He indicated he would balk at the group having the authority to alter the Urban Forestry department's budget annually, as that is Council's job. He added that when the mayor speaks of authority, he is referring to making a decision that is binding and has legal authority. He finished by stating that Council could probably do a better job of soliciting feedback from experts when it comes to trees while considering legislation concerning rezoning and redevelopment.

Councilman Rader stated that tree canopy development is a significant enough topic on its own to warrant creating a group and that it seems that there are enough passionate people to meet monthly on the topic. He related the creation of the group to his experience serving on the Lakewood Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board (LASWAB). Mayor Summers stated that

City Council and the Mayor's office should not cede responsibilities on the matter of funding tree canopy development and that creating an advisory board regarding the issue, modeled after the Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission or LASWAB, makes more sense. He did caution that both of these groups have floundered at times, meeting when a serious issue arises and then floundering once the issue is moving in the right direction.

Councilman Bullock agreed that some form of group designation is needed and that having some form of formal capacity could make interactions with the public more meaningful. He suggested 3 areas where a tree group could make an impact: citizen oversight of projects, public education on the private side of the property line, and incubation of new proposals or difficult ones such as a mature tree ordinance. He dissected the differences between a commission, task force, and advisory board, concluding that forming an advisory board could work well. Councilman Rader noted that meeting with the animal control officer at LASWAB meeting's enables the dissemination of accurate information and asked the members of the former tree task force how they felt about creating a tree advisory board. Mr. Palmer indicated that an advisory board could work and that he would be happy to lead an hour-long tree educational program for citizens at the library once a quarter. Rader added that sending board members to block clubs would be a great alternative as well.

Councilwoman George expressed her support for creating an advisory board structure over that of a commission. Mr. Perry agreed, stating that the advisory board structure is the way to go. He committed to attending all of the groups meetings and noted that the tree task force recommendations served as a good foundation for policy in his department. He stated that the City has an active tree action plan that has gone beyond the group's recommendations, however the weakest link of that plan is public education. He expressed his support for the group attempting to reach across the private property line to encourage tree canopy growth. Mayor Summers added that when people at the committee hearing go to recruit members, they should be clear about why they are being recruited and that there is a need for people willing to knock on doors and complete the public education component.

Councilman Rader stated he will work with the Council Clerk to come up with a new version of legislation creating a tree advisory board and will unveil it once it is drafted. He invited any of the former tree task force members to send any suggestions to him. Councilman Anderson stated he is in favor of the advisory board effort and stated that this designation gives the board opportunity to show their merit, just as LASWAB had to do in years past when people attempted to remove it. Council President O'Leary asked for feedback on the current number of board members, which is 5 as of the current legislation. He questioned whether a large group that can do aggressive outreach is needed or if it should be smaller in order to meet quorum. Rader stated that ex officio positions should not be included in the number and Bullock suggested it should replicate LASWAB. Rader stated that there are 200 people serving on board and commissions in Lakewood and keeping the seats filled on the board may not be easy. David Sangree suggested

the number of seats should be 7 instead of 5. Councilwoman George suggested mirroring off of other boards.

Councilman Rader initiated brief discussion regarding the tree principles ordinance. Councilman Bullock stated that it should be passed in the spirit of Council affirming its policy goals on the tree issue. The only time it has been done in the past has been through Council's budgetary work. Councilman Anderson questioned if the resolution addressed any money allotted for trees. Bullock suggested the resolution provides policy longevity that will span multiple administrations. Mayor Summers referenced the resolution's stated goal of planting 200 trees per year and stated that the City is doing more than that, however it is running out of public places to plant trees. He stated that Mr. Perry counts 865 spaces left and that there needs to be some parameters put around the annual planting figure. Mr. Perry suggested that a quick add on to the #2 goal proposed would be to state that a 95% capacity should be kept up on available sites. He noted that sites will always be in flux and that eventually not having space to plant 200 trees a year is a good problem to have. Lastly, he stated that the 19 policy recommendations have been paired down to 15 in this piece of legislation.

#### **Approval of the minutes from the May 20th Public Works Committee.**

Councilman Rader made a motion to approve the minutes from last Public Works Committee meeting, which was seconded by Councilman Bullock. All members voting yea. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

RESOLUTION NO.

By: RADER, BULLOCK, ANDERSON

A RESOLUTION to endorse the principles for tree care and the urban forestry management goals recommended by the 2013-2014 Lakewood Tree Task Force and City Forestry Manager.

WHEREAS, healthy, mature, and safe trees are beneficial to property values, air quality, storm water management, energy use reduction, and the beautification of the City of Lakewood; and

WHEREAS, attaining success in the City's urban forestry goals will require, by definition, long- term planning and consistent policies over many decades; and

WHEREAS, the attainment of a lasting mature tree canopy requires prudence, foresight, and many decades of investment which, once lost, cannot be regained for decades; and

WHEREAS, a healthy and robust urban forest canopy can serve as a "green trademark" for the community, helping to attract and retain residents and to distinguish the City of Lakewood as a leader in sustainability in the region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Lakewood's name implicitly incorporates a healthy urban forest as part of the very identity of our community; and

WHEREAS, the following principles of tree care were recommended by the 2013-2014 Tree Task Force and/or the City Forestry Manager:

1. Work towards a goal of increasing the City's tree canopy from 28.5 to 33.5 percent. (TTF Recommendation #1, amended by Forestry)
2. Work toward a goal of planting 500 trees across the community on private, school, and City properties annually, including at least 200 on City-owned land. (TTF Recommendations #2-3)
3. Maintain a flexible approach toward sidewalk defects caused by tree roots. (TTF Recommendation #4)
4. Ensure that every appropriate tree lawn receives a tree and that larger tree

lawns receive more than one if possible. (TTF Recommendation #5)

5. Encourage monetary and other donations by private citizens in tree plantings in parks and public areas. (TTF Recommendation #6)
6. Maintain a “Right tree, right place” policy to allow the City to minimize tree death and infrastructure impacts while increasing the long-term viability of trees. (TTF Recommendation #6 & Forestry)
7. Plant the largest suitable tree for a given site to maximize the economic and ecological benefits of that site to the community, given the longer lifespan of and greater magnitude of benefits bestowed by larger trees. (TTF Recommendation #6 & Forestry)
8. Maintain a policy of varying trees by age and species on any given street, park, or public area to help mitigate the threats posed by pests, diseases, storms, or old age, thereby reducing the likelihood of large tree losses across the city and resulting in a more consistent tree canopy over time. (TTF Recommendation #6 & Forestry)
9. Educate residents concerning the availability of complimentary tree planting on tree lawns, the Gift-a-Tree fund, as well as the opportunity to participate in a low-cost purchase of trees for private yards. (TTF Recommendation #7 & 13)
10. Prioritize maintenance of trees and new plantings in the commercial corridor, particularly in light of new developments. (TTF Recommendation #8)
11. Ensure that all relevant City employees and contractors are trained to reduce negative impacts to tree roots, limbs, and other vulnerable tree elements in the course of mowing, trimming, machinery operation, digging; concrete work, construction work, and similar activities. (TTF Recommendation #9)
12. Cooperate with a permanent Tree Commission for the purpose of collaborating with City officials regarding its urban tree policies and practices, promoting the City’s tree programs and educating residents regarding responsible tree stewardship. (TTF Recommendation #10)

13. Ensure that the City's annual reforestation budget and contracting authority are appropriate to meet the future year's tree goals. (TTF Recommendation #11)
14. Ensure that staffing levels are maintained in the Forestry Division and that the Division is empowered to contract out certain tree care tasks such as dead tree removal. (TTF Recommendation #12)
15. Maintain and grow the tree tag program which has already identified over 70 trees in our City parks. (TTF Recommendation #15)
15. Maintain a policy of consistently watering newly-planted public trees during the first two years of life to aid the survival rate of those trees, thereby making efficient use of public dollars. (TTF Recommendation #17)

; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, OHIO:**

Section 1. This Council and Mayor of the City of Lakewood hereby indicate support and endorsement of the principles for tree care and the urban forestry management goals recommended by the 2013-14 Lakewood Tree Task Force and amended by the City's Forestry Division as set forth in the preamble of this resolution. Each of the recitals listed in the preamble to this resolution shall be the policy of the City, and the principles and goals therein shall guide City budgeting, decision making, and procedures for urban forestry until such time as they might be updated or repealed by this Council.

Section 2. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Section 3. The Clerk of Council is hereby authorized and directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to the Mayor and a copy of this Resolution shall be spread upon the minutes of this meeting.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

AN ORDINANCE enacting Chapter 161, Tree Commission, of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances to establish a permanent Tree Commission for the purpose of collaborating with City officials regarding its urban tree policies and practices, promoting the City's tree programs and educating residents regarding responsible tree stewardship.

WHEREAS, recognizing the importance of trees to the cultural and environmental wellbeing of our City, the Tree Task Force was established by City Council in 2012 and charged with recommending action items on the City's public and private tree populations; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the task force issued a set of 19 recommendations to Council focused on tree planting, tree policies, education, outreach and tree protection; and

WHEREAS, one of the Tree Task Force's recommendations was that the City establish a permanent Tree Commission; and

WHEREAS, this Council concurs with the Tree Task Force's above-mentioned recommendation and believes that the City and its residents would benefit from the knowledge and enthusiasm of a permanent volunteer Tree Commission; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, OHIO:

Section 1. Chapter 161, Tree Commission, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 161  
Tree Commission**

- 161.01 Establishment; purpose.
- 161.02 Membership
- 161.03 Terms
- 161.04 Bylaws and general rules of operation
- 161.05 Public records; Reporting duties

**Section 161.01 Establishment**

That the Tree Commission is hereby established with the charge of collaborating with City officials regarding its urban tree policies and practices, promoting the City's tree programs and educating residents regarding responsible tree stewardship.

**Section 161.02 Membership**

The Tree Commission shall be composed of five volunteer members, three of whom shall be appointed by Council and two of whom shall be appointed by the Mayor. Special consideration will be given to applicants with background and expertise in forestry. One member shall be the Director of Public Works or his or her designee and shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member. Council may appoint a non-voting ex officio member if it chooses.

**Section 161.03 Terms**

Members of the Tree Commission shall serve a term of three years and receive no compensation for service. Initial appointment shall be staggered so that two members' terms expire every three years.

**Section 161.04 Bylaws and general rules of operation**

The Tree Commission shall be empowered to adopt its own bylaws and rules for operation consistent with this chapter including whether or not to elect a Chairperson or other officers.

**161.05 Public records; Reporting duties**

All meetings of the Tree Commission shall be open to the public and a record of its business maintained by its members. The Commission is responsible for compliance with Chapter 109 of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances. The Commission is required to arrange an annual meeting with City Council's Public Works Committee to discuss its work.

SECTION 2. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this council concerning and relating to the passage of this resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all such deliberations of this Council and of any of its committee that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

