



PARKS & TREES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – January 5, 2016

Members Present: Al Reed, Mary Sue Truesdale, Barb Willens, Maureen Renault, Jane Miller and Bob Williams

Members Absent: Thelma Rutledge

Staff Present: Liz Gilland, Urban Forester

NEXT MEETING: FIELD TRIP - FEBRUARY 2nd at 3:30PM - PLEASE DRESS APPROPRIATELY

The meeting was opened at 4:08 p.m. by Liz. The minutes from the October 2015 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Barb to accept minutes as presented, it was seconded by Jane and all approved the minutes.

CITY UPDATE:

Christmas decorations – All went well with installation of the light pole decorations and Christmas trees and the official tree lighting ceremony was a big success. Approx. 90 wreaths, 50 silhouettes, 235 strands of garland and over 350 bows were installed throughout the city. We had seven (7) trees decorated with lights at City Hall, Boykin Park, Kirkwood Park, Monument Sq., Rectory Sq., Town Green and Park Place. The trees at the latter three locations were cut trees from a NC Christmas Tree Farm. Decorations will start coming down this week, weather permitting. It will take about a week or more to get everything down. We will be considering a dance company at the 2016 tree lighting ceremony as a group called back in October offering their talents but the youth choir was already set up. Al said this may cause hurt feelings if all of the dance companies are not involved. Liz said the short ceremony can't accommodate multiple dance companies and that we were approached directly and not solicited. On a different note, Maureen said she over-heard folks at the ceremony say that they were told by one of the merchants on Rutledge Street to move their vehicle as they couldn't park where they had. She suggested that the City touch base with the merchants to promote the ceremony and offer them an opportunity to be involved in some way.

Storm Damaged Trees – Still waiting for the ground to dry out to remove cut tree logs and large up-rooted stumps at Hampton Park, Kendall Park and on Desassure Street as a result of the October storms.

Tree City USA Status – The City has to apply for recertification under the Tree City USA program. We have been a Tree City for 28 consecutive years and in December had the SC Forestry Commission present our award to Council. Liz explained to the new folks the four criteria required for recertification as well as some of the data submitted to the Arbor Day Foundation. The total expenditures for overall tree mgmt. were \$280,000. This includes planting, watering, mulching, utility line pruning, other pruning, salaries, contract tree work, equipment and professional training, etc.

Underground utility installation – The City is contracting with Sumter Utilities to install the utility lines underground. This is a major project that will occur within the historic district, specifically on Lyttleton, Fair, Mill, portion of Laurens, East Hampton and the entire Mill Village. While the installation is using directional boring techniques which drill and install the conduits under the trees, there will still be much disruption to the existing street trees. This is due to the necessity to come to the surface with the various conduit pipes to install switch gear boxes and individual utility boxes to homes not to mention the decorative light poles. Liz said that we won't know for 3 years what the total impact will be.



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Rhame Arena – Howard Wallace with Sassafras Landscapes has been working on the landscape design and irrigation plans for a month or so and Liz hopes to meet with him this week to review the final plans. We expect to begin landscaping in February, hopefully. Maureen wanted to know if there were any plans to make / install some kind of walkway connecting the Arena to the Farmers Market that would run parallel to Broad Street. Liz said that no plans had been mentioned and that while it would be do-able the project would have to work through City staff, City Council, SCDOT and Historic Camden to get it done.

Cedarbrook Apts – Drafts plans for an apt complex behind the Rite Aid and Advance Auto Parts have been submitted for consideration. Some tree protection may be possible for ‘significant trees’ but most of the trees will have to be cut because of the foot-print of the buildings and parking lot as well as utility installation. Liz showed the group the proposed landscape plan and discussed the pros and cons of the project. Also discussed was the definition of a significant tree and the on-the-ground logistics required for tree protection.

Pending Tree Work – It was shared that Liz is in the process of getting quotes from tree service companies for pending tree work. There are approximately 35 to 40 trees needing removed and 45 trees needing a combination of deadwood pruning and crown-raising for vehicle clearance.

OLD BUSINESS

Kirkwood Park – Liz shared with Sue that Tony Burns, Parks Supervisor, is working with a welder to make the new doors for the concession stand as they are not a normal size and that other staff members will be looking into a getting a new roof.

NEW BUSINESS

Parks Inventory & Needs List – In 2008 the Commission began an every-other year review of the various city parks. The purposed of this review is to determine the need for improvements to the parks and to help guide and justify budget requests. The last time this was done was winter/spring of 2014. Liz shared with the group the most recent inventory list and the items that have been accomplished since then. It is time to perform site visits again so we have scheduled the next several meetings to do so. On Tuesday, February 2nd we will meet at the Public Works office at 3:30pm for site visits.

Margot Rochester Landscape Award Program – Liz shared with the group that it’s the time of year to embark on the Landscape Award program, if that’s what the group wanted to do. Since there are three new members on the Commission who are not familiar with the program it was briefly explained. Bob said that someone he knows (a Master Gardener?) may be interested in spear-heading the program. Liz said that it was developed by the Commission under the authority of the City and that if the program were to be handled by a different entity that it should be a group decision to relinquish it altogether to that entity. After a brief discussion, it was decided to distribute the background information and task list to Barb, Bob and Maureen so they can get a better feel for the program before the group decides anything. At this point in time, no Commission member has expressed an interest in taking the lead on implementing nominations for 2016.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by Liz Gilland, Camden Urban Forester