

Taylorville City Tree Board Meeting
April 16, 2013

Members Present:

Geri Niemann
Chad Lavin
Phyllis Wilson
Rhonda Kraft

Also Present:

Greg Hager
Gene & Sue Babbs
Jamie Austif

Members Absent:

Adam Johnson
Alderman Burtle

Chairman Kraft called the meeting to order on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 5:00 P.M.

First agenda item discussed was/is the issue with City Sweet Gum trees. The recent request to remove a Sweet Gum Tree at 310 Richmond St., and the subsequent discussion by aldermen to eradicate all City Sweet Gum Trees was discussed. Four citizens from the Richmond St. neighborhood came to the meeting to personally express their desire to have the tree removed. They reiterated Superintendent Wiseman's complaint that they clog the catch basin at the corner of the block and cause rainwater backup when there is a heavy rain. They also stated that the sweet gum balls are a nuisance/hazard when mowing and have created problems with their sidewalk. The board listened to all arguments concerning the tree and thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting to share their experiences & concerns. Chairman Kraft stated that the board was not able to make a recommendation again as it was not an agenda item but a second request to remove the tree would be put on the May meeting agenda. Board members present agreed to go out again and look more closely at the sidewalk situation. The board discussed the situation further after the Richmond St. citizens left and it was the unanimous feeling of the board members present that the vote in March to preserve the tree would continue to stand. Chairman Kraft explained to the citizens the reasoning behind the board's vote.

Second agenda item discussed was the upcoming City Tree Inventory. Board members Niemann, Kraft, future board member Barb Kerns, and Alderman Burtle attended a training class on Saturday, April 13th to prepare for the inventory. The Tree Board has been able to enlist the help of Emily Hanson from the SIU Forestry Department to instruct and guide us through a complete City Tree Inventory to take place this spring/summer. The inventory will document and identify all City trees. Various categories of identification will be used so that risk assessment, economic benefits, and planning statistics can be compiled for City purposes. Emily and another forestry student will be back in Taylorville on April 30th to work the entire day on the inventory. We continue to seek reliable volunteers to help with the project but some preliminary training will be necessary or if working as a team (which is recommended) an inexperienced person accompany an experienced person.

Third agenda item discussed briefly was an ecology immersion class offered on October 16th at the Starhill Forest Aboretum in Petersburg. The class is entitled “Ecology & Practice of Establishing Native Oaks”. Chairman Kraft plans to attend and Mayor Brotherton asked that all board members be made aware of the opportunity so that the City might pay for at least two people to attend. All board members present declined.

Motion to adjourn by board member Kraft and seconded by board member Niemann. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Rhonda Kraft, Chairman