

Taylorville City Tree Board Meeting
December 28, 2016

Members Present:

Kellie Hamell
Greg Patrick
Donna Rohrer
Alderman Larry Budd

Also Present:

Mayor Greg Brotherton
Barb Grabner-Kerns

The Tree Board meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM.

Mayor Brotherton welcomed the new members to the Board and distributed copies of information taken from the Taylorville City Code regarding the creation and duties of the Tree Board.

The Mayor discussed the recent history of the Tree Board and explained that being a board member was not always easy. He advised the new members that often aldermen may disagree with the Tree Board's recommendations and may refuse to approve them. He stated that he is aware that it can be very frustrating to do considerable research on an issue only to have your recommendations dismissed but he urged the board members to develop thick skins.

New board member Donna Rohrer asked for clarification on just what the duties of the board members would be. Mayor Brotherton advised her that in his opinion their primary duties involved educating members of the Taylorville City Council and the public regarding the importance of trees. He reminded the board members that the City is currently dealing with trees that are creating problems because of their location on City boulevards. He stated that today's problems are the result of a lack of long term planning. The majority of the trees causing problems were planted over 50 years ago when things like electrical power lines, cable and telephone lines were not an issue.

Greg Patrick asked if City employees spent a lot of time dealing with tree issues and the Mayor stated that a considerable amount time was expended throughout the year. Over \$28,000 was spent the past year for limb pickup and removal.

The Mayor advised the board members that Taylorville has been designated as a Tree City for the past 27 years and that he was working with Barb Grabner-Kerns to get this year's Tree City application submitted before the end of the year. He thanked Barb for all the work she has done on behalf of the City.

The Mayor pointed out that the City has been unable to provide the needed maintenance that newly planted trees need. Lack of available manpower to properly water the trees has been an issue. Barb Grabner-Kerns mentioned that several of the new trees were planted in very poor soil and this also contributed to problems. Alderman Larry Budd

stated that the Tree Board also lacked the funds needed to do its job. Both Alderman Budd and the Mayor agreed that an effort needed to be made to include some funding for the Tree Board in the next City budget.

Discussion regarding new ideas for Tree Board projects followed. Mayor Brotherton mentioned that the bike trail might be an excellent tool to educate citizens on the different kinds of trees in the area. He suggested the possibility of posting informational placards of some type identifying trees along the trail. Kellie Hamell stated that she thought Decatur had just initiated something similar.

The Mayor advised that the next meeting would take place in the first part of next year. Meeting was adjourned at 5:42 PM.