

# Village of Fox Point Tree Commission

Minutes of November 2, 2023

A meeting of the Village of Fox Point Tree Commission was held at the Fox Point Village Hall on Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

## 1. Roll Call

**Present:** Trustee Eric Fonstad (Chair), Kim Caviggiola, Jonathan Knopp, Louise Petering

**Absent:** Ramsey Radakovich

**Ex Officio:** John Gall, Village Forester

Also present were Kathe Lake, 7471 N Beach Ct., and Trustee Greg Ollman, 7525 N. Fairchild.

The meeting notice was mailed to the *North Shore Now* and to all others as required by the State open meeting laws, and posted on the Village website and bulletin boards.

A quorum being present, Mr. Fonstad called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Following the roll call, Mr. Fonstad invited public comment.

Kathe Lake said she would wait to comment until the agenda item about trees on Beach Drive.

Greg Ollman stated that at the November 8, 2022 Village Board meeting he raised concerns about enforcement of the Village's clear cutting ordinance, that he did not receive notice of the Tree Commission's February 2, 2023, meeting, and that he came to Village Hall to attend the Tree Commission meeting scheduled for May 11, 2023, that could not be held due to the lack of a quorum. He said that he was provided a copy of the Village Attorney's memorandum discussing the enforceability of the clear cut ordinance and is happy to see that something is being done to address the issues.

Mr. Fonstad noted that, in lieu of holding a meeting on May 11, 2023, the members of the Commission present, Mr. Ollman, Director of Public Works Scott Brandmeier, and the Village Attorney discussed the Village's efforts to preserve high value trees. The Village Attorney recommended that the Commission try to devise a system that rewards residents for preserving trees rather than punishing them for removing trees and Forester Gall asked the Village Attorney to research the matter. Forester Gall suggested that the focus be placed on maintaining the health of the tree canopy rather than on trying to protect individual trees.

Prior to approval of the minutes of the February 2, 2023, meeting, Mr. Fonstad noted for the record that earlier in the year Forester Gall received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council in recognition of nearly fifty years of service as an urban forestry specialist, including fourteen years as the Village's contract forester.

## 2. Approval of Minutes.

Following discussion, the minutes of the February 2, 2023, meeting were approved.

## 3. Old Business.

### a. Discussion of Private Property Tree Retention Alternatives

Forester Gall reported the Village Attorney provided three examples of tree retention ordinances for the Commission's consideration, two from communities in the State of Washington and one

from Texas. It was the consensus of the members of the Commission after discussing these materials that a different approach is needed. They discussed using storm water rates to reward canopy preservation and enhancement. Properties with a large amount of tree canopy would be entitled to reduced storm water rates, much as properties are charged lower storm water rates for having a lower percent of impervious area. Rates would be based on the tree canopy survey regularly conducted by the State. Rates could be reviewed and changed if there is a new tree canopy survey, when a building permit includes tree removal or planting, or upon the request of a property owner who has planted new trees.

The Commission members discussed the benefits of a healthy tree canopy, including CO<sub>2</sub> absorption, transpiration, and runoff/erosion control. Forester Gall offered to research the benefits and to provide a list to the Village Attorney. It was noted that woody shrubs may provide similar benefits.

Mr. Fonstad requested the Forester Gall ask the Village Attorney for his recommendations about possibly modifying Chapter 285-11 (Restrictions on Cutting) or repealing Chapter 310-20 to 23 (Clear-Cutting).

#### **b. Discussion on Reduction of Pesticide Usage**

Forester Gall noted the Village's use of pesticides is minimal and has decreased in recent years. Commission member Ramsey Radakovich distributed information to Commission members prior to the meeting about pesticide use by the county and other North shore communities. Forester Gall suggested deferring further discussion of the topic until Mr. Radakovich was present. In response to a question, Forester Gall reported that, other than treating for Emerald Ash Borer, the Village does not budget funds to treat Village trees against pests and pathogens. He noted that doing so would be expensive.

#### **c. Marketing the Tree Commission Mission**

The Commission members discussed marketing the Commission's mission. Efforts to participate in the Fourth of July parade in 2023 were unsuccessful. It was the consensus of the Commission to forgo participating in the parade in 2024.

The Commission member discussed ways to celebrate special trees in the Village. Forester Gall distribute materials prepared by the Village of Shorewood that highlight "distinguished" trees in that community. He noted that the Village will be using DNR grant money in 2024 to re-inventory Village trees and that he planned to seek a grant for 2025 that could be used to produce a pamphlet and website material about notable Fox Point trees.

Forester Gall distributed materials prepared by the Arbor Day Foundation that can be imprinted with Village information and distributed to residents, perhaps at the Farmers Market. The members of the Commission also discussed trying to place articles in the Northshore Point of View that feature Fox Point trees.

Mr. Knopp asked about the feasibility of establishing a Village fruit tree orchard. Possible locations and cost implications were discussed. The idea of holding a tree planting seminar was also discussed. Kathe Lake suggested developing an "adopt a tree" program for new trees.

### **4. New Business**

#### **a. Forester's Activities Update year to date**

Forester Gall reported that 109 new trees were planted on Village property during the year. In response to a question, he estimated the Village spends about \$26,000 a year on planting material.

Forester Gall reported on tree damage in March 2023 during heavy snowstorms. Eighteen Village trees were so heavily damaged that they needed to be removed. Another 74 Village trees required pruning due to broken limbs. He noted that he received many more requests over the summer to take care of broken and hanging limbs from the storms.

Forester Gall reported that material was placed on the Village website about mulching leaves in the fall rather than having them hauled away by the Village. He intends to remind residents each fall of the benefits of mulching leaves.

#### **b. Completed Landscape Enhancements at Two Village Public Sites**

Forester Gall described landscape enhancements at three Village owned locations where invasive plants were removed and noninvasive species planted.

He also briefly mentioned expected impacts on trees during major road construction activities planned for 2024 on Bradley Road and along Lake Drive.

#### **c. Review of Tree Planting and Removal along Beach Drive Project**

Forester Gall reported that since 2011 a total of 57 public trees have been removed along both sides of Beach Drive in the areas of the revetment project and a total of twelve have been planted. Since the start of the revetment project, nine significant trees and three juniper bushes have been removed. In addition, some smaller trees next to the lakeshore were washed away during storms before the shoreline was stabilized. In addition, three 5-inch trees that were too closed to stormwater pipes were relocated in the spring. He reported that all three seemed to be doing well.

Thirteen trees are scheduled to be planted in 2024 on the lake side of the road as part of the re-landscaping part of the project, five in the northern part of the project and eight in the southern portion. Forester Gall said the final locations of the trees to be planted in 2024 have not been determined but that he is sensitive to resident's concerns about maintaining views of the lake.

Mr. Fonstad noted that the landscaping plans for these areas, including the number, types and locations of trees to be planted, was presented at the public information meeting held in November 2022. The materials from the public information meeting have been on the Village website since. He also noted that the goal of the revetment project was to protect the road and sanitary sewer from shoreline erosion and to re-establish as natural a looking shoreline as possible. He distributed photographs showing trees along the shoreline before the revetment project and after.

Kathe Lake said when she moved to Beach Court there were upwards of forty trees and several juniper bushes along the lakeside and now there are only a few. She feels trees enhance the view of the lake. Trees planted now will take years to mature. She encouraged the Village to continue to plant trees along the lake for the benefit of future generations.

#### **5. Any other matters that may come before the Tree Commission (informational only – no action taken).**

The next meeting of the Commission was scheduled for January 25, 2024 at Village Hall at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.