

Village of Fox Point Tree Commission

Minutes of March 13, 2025

A meeting of the Village of Fox Point Tree Commission was held at the Fox Point Village Hall on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Trustee Eric Fonstad (Chair), Jonathan Knopp, Kim Caviggiola & Catie Anderson

Absent: Ramsey Radakovich

Ex Officio: John Gall, Village Forester

Also in attendance was Matt Siesco of Wachtel Tree Science, Larry Booth & Trustee Elizabeth Aelion.

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, Eric called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

There was no citizen comment.

2. Approval of Minutes.

Following discussion, the minutes of the December 12, 2024, meeting were approved with minor corrections.

3. Old Business.

a. Initiatives for Tree Planting on Private Property

Eric noted that at the Commission's December meeting Commission members asked Forester Gall to work with Village staff to prepare suitable forms and other documentation to implement a tree planting on private property initiative with discount and rebate options for presentation at this meeting. John and Matt reviewed a sample announcement of a free tree program that they said could be modified to present information about discount and rebate programs for Fox Point. John reported that, due to limited staff resources, other forms or documentation for the proposed programs have not been prepared.

Following discussion, the members of the Commission requested Eric and John work together to prepare a brief overview of the proposed programs and request time at the next Village Board meeting to present them to the Board in order to determine the level of support on the Board for the programs. It was suggested that, initially only the discounted tree program be proposed, and the rebate program presented as something that could be added once the discount program is established. For administrative simplicity with regard to the rebate program, Commission members recommended a fixed amount be set for the rebate rather than offering to rebate a percentage of the cost of the tree.

It was also suggested that, in implementing the discount program, staff schedule a date that residents would either pick up their trees or, at their option, pay a fee to have the trees delivered to their homes by Village staff.

b. Tree Canopy Analysis

Forester Gall presented updated information about Fox Point's tree canopy. He noted Fox Point historically has had a high percentage of tree canopy cover. Eric pointed out that trees are part of the character of the Village and that the ongoing loss of ash trees by Emerald Ash Borer threatens to change the character of the Village unless more trees are planted. Over the last fifteen years the Village has done a very good job of replacing deceased ash trees on public property with a mixture of trees but most of the trees that make up Fox Point's tree canopy are on private property. He noted other communities are taking the initiative to encourage and support planting of trees on private property. In addition to maintaining the semi-rural character of the Village, other public benefits to do this include improved air quality, lower energy costs to cool homes, improved wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and reduced stormwater runoff.

c. Update on Landscape Plan Submitted for St. Augustine Prep

John reported St. Augustine has not provided the Village with an update to their landscape plans. The Village received an email on February 25, 2025, that indicated St. Augustine Prep wanted to review the site in the spring before determining how to proceed.

4. New Business

a. Forester's Activities Update

John presented his annual activities report. He noted the 10-year Emerald Ash Borer Initiative ended in 2020. The Village continues to treat approximately 800 high quality ash trees on public property. The 2025 spring planting program will plant 121 trees. Notable planting areas include installing Alders in an open area along Santa Monica Boulevard, planting screening trees by a new stormwater detention feature by Bradley Road and Lake Drive, and replanting Arbor Vitae near the Nokomis Court footpath.

The Village will treat about 390 ash trees for Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in 2025. John reported 8-10 of the approximately 800 ash trees the Village treats for EAB are lost due to storms and age each year. None of the Village ash trees being treated for EAB have been lost to EAB.

Forestry requests during 2024 were lower than they have been in recent years, possibly because there were fewer damaging wind storms during the year.

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

The annual Arbor Day observance will be held on April 25th at Maple Dale School beginning at 2:00 p.m. Jonathan will follow up with the school's administration about his idea of a "WE LOVE OUR TREES" sign design contest for students to be held in conjunction with Arbor Day program.

The next meeting of the Commission was scheduled for June 5, 2025 at Village Hall at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.