

Owatonna Shade Tree Commission
West Hills Admin. Bldg.

October 16, 2023

PRESENT: Jon Simon, Ron Segner, Doug Elsner, Nikk Dickerson, Jon Simon, Kaye Fransen, Caleb Whalen and Gary Schwartz STAFF: Brad Rademacher

The meeting was called to order by Brad Rademacher at 5:08 pm.

The agenda was approved as printed.

MSP Schwartz/Simon to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2023 meeting.

MSP Fransen/Simon to approve the agenda

Unfinished Business – none

New Business

Several new members signed the Oath of Office.

The Commission reviewed and discussed an email report from Justin Brown – Owatonna Tree Staff Chair. This year the staff has treated 334 Ash trees with chemicals. This completes the first series of a three-year plan to treat all boulevard trees (about 1000 according to inventory). The second round will begin in 2024. The crew has removed 48 boulevard Ash trees in 2023.

Homeowners will get replacement trees and can purchase “large trees” for an extra \$100.

The boulevard inventory is completed. The Owatonna city parks inventory is at about 50%. The park trees will not be treated (the decision of the Park and Recreation Department.) They will be removed and replaced on a 2-1 or 3-1 basis.

The city has applied for a MN DNR ReLeaf Forestry Grant of \$500,000. The funds can be used for:

- Finish the inventory of the trees in city parks,
- Removing, replacing, treating Ash trees,
- Payment of staff working on the tree issues,
- Training staff – (several need ISA Certification – International Society of Arborists),
- Costs to attend annual Shade Tree Short Course.

Information on the grant application will be forwarded by email to all the Shade Tree Commission members.

There were questions/discussion about the effect of the drought on the health of trees.

There were questions/discussion about the trees planted in the boxes along N. Cedar Ave. downtown.

The next meeting will be Monday, April 15, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Gary M. Schwartz