

**CITY OF CORVALLIS  
MINUTES OF THE CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION & URBAN FORESTRY  
ADVISORY COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 13, 2014**

Attendance

Matt Sanchez, Chair  
Owen Dell, Vice Chair  
Angelica Rehkugler  
Brian Kreft  
Becky Goslow  
Ruby Moon  
Larry Passmore  
Joel Hirsch, City Council Liaison

Staff

Jude Geist, Parks Supervisor  
John Hinkle, Urban Forester AIC  
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Guests

America McMillin  
Josh Bjornstedt  
Samuel Pape  
Ellen Pesek

Absent/Excused

Ross Parkerson  
Tim Brewer  
Norm Brown, OSU Liaison

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

	Agenda Item	Summary of Recommendations
III.	Vegetation Presentation	Larry Passmore presented on American Chestnuts.
IV.	Approval of January 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes	Approved as presented.
V.	Visitors' Propositions	None.
VI.	15 <sup>th</sup> Street Project – Planning Presentation	Josh Bjornstedt, Public Works- Engineering outlined the project and answered questions.
VII.	Parks Landscape Maintenance Update – America McMillin	Parks Operations Specialist America McMillin described the various WaterWise and Pesticide Free project sites, begun in 2008.
VIII.	Staff Reports – If Questions.	Information only.
IX.	City Council / OSU Liaison Reports	None.
X.	Discuss Mission/Vision/Tasks/Goals for 2014-2015	Geist will bring back revised goals for a quick review.
XI.	Report on Subcommittees	Information only.
XII.	Adjournment	The next meeting will be held March 13, 2014 at 8:30 a.m., at the Avery Park Admin building conference room.

## **CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Matt Sanchez called the meeting of the Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry Advisory Commission to order at 8:30 a.m.

### **II. INTRODUCTIONS.**

### **III. VEGETATION PRESENTATION.**

Larry Passmore made a Vegetation Presentation on American Chestnuts. He said there were formerly billions of chestnut trees on the east coast from around the Carolinas north through New England. The first inventory on Chestnut blight was performed in 1913. He recently met a chestnut aficionado who is seeking to breed resistant strains. The only way to know you're successful in breeding for blight resistance is when the blight comes through. Blight typically kills the tops of trees, and they then sprout again. There are American, Chinese and Horse Chestnuts (the latter are not edible). Edible varieties have sharp tines; American and Chinese chestnuts have simple leaves, while Horse Chestnuts have palmate leaves. American Chestnuts have small nuts, while Chinese have larger nuts. Both are self-pollinating. Two or more trees will cross-pollinate, and generate many more nuts.

Passmore related that there has been a lot of research on finding trees with blight resistance. Also, American varieties have been crossed with Chinese (resistant) chestnuts, leaving them about 90% American. Stepping on the nuts' sharp burred exterior breaks them open, revealing the nuts. Moon related that a farm outside Portland is growing them commercially. He said there were generally only a scattering of trees in Oregon.

### **IV. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Owen Dell moved to approve the January 9, 2014 minutes as presented; Becki Goslow seconded; motion passed.

### **V. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS. None.**

### **VI. 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET PROJECT – PLANNING PRESENTATION.**

Josh Bjornstedt, Public Works- Engineering, said 15<sup>th</sup> Street had reached the end of its useful life and would be reconstructed in April. The intersection at Washington Way will be signalized and the road straightened over the railroad. Washington Way will be widened to collector status with bike lanes.

The reconstruction will go down 30", and will impact trees near Western Boulevard, mostly Norway Maples growing over the curb. Their root bases have been trimmed over the years and are in the street structure. John Hinkle added that all root mass will be lost on one side of the trees, so he recommended removing them, since they had other problems as well. Bjorn said that Red Horse Chestnuts (with red flowers, not the usual

white ones) will be planted as part of the project. He said Hinkle will handle the public notification process.

Moon asked whether the changes would promote increased traffic; Bjornstedt replied the surface would be improved, with improved sight lines, and sidewalks will be improved. Dell asked if the chestnuts would create a safety issue; McMillin replied that some varieties were barren. Bjornstedt added that they have been approved as an appropriate street tree. Maples along parking lots will remain, and trees will be added along Washington Way. Hinkle felt “Frontier” or “Prospector” variety elms provide better shade. Bjornstedt summed up that five trees would be lost, and replaced by 21. Construction should finish by September. Passmore said the recently developed campus area north of Jefferson was beautiful. Hinkle said the trees will be posted for removal next week; bids for removal will go up within a couple weeks.

## **VII. PARKS LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE UPDATE – AMERICA MCMILLIN.**

Parks Operations Specialist America McMillin said she’s been working on WaterWise and Pesticide Free project sites. Two sites were initially planted, and volunteers have helped on the projects. The department saw the need to reduce water use and the use and need for pesticides in landscaped beds over the long run, and decided to look at ways of implementing that successfully.

In 2008, a 780 square foot area at Riverfront Park was planted, along with a 1200 square feet street island site at 18<sup>th</sup> and Van Buren. The main planting bed at Osborn Aquatic Center was planted in 2010; a site in Sunset Park was revamped in 2011; and the Riverfront Park site was extended in 2011. A total of one-third of an acre in the parks system (of a total of five to six acres of landscaped beds) is under Pesticide Free WaterWise management. Rehkugler said the project was first spearheaded by former OSU professor and former CBUF member David Sandrock.

The 2008 Riverfront Park site was a 12’ by 65’ strip at the top of riverbank there. Irrigation was capped and a special soil mix tilled in. Since then perennials have filled in, and some plants have re-seeded.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and Van Buren Street island site was initially maintained by volunteers; however, it became infested with thistles, so prior to this planting, it was excavated two feet down and a one-time chemical use of the herbicide Casuron applied to suppress extensive invasive thistle root fragments. The same plant design as Riverfront was used. There is still a lot of bare space, but there are few weeds, either.

The Osborn Aquatic Center site was planted in May 2010. A \$1,500 Sustainable Purchasing Program grant funded the planting. Only half was fertilized, and the difference can still be seen. Osborn staff were hand-watering plants, and a contractor mistakenly pulled all seedlings (so for awhile there was no re-seeding). She has now taken over that maintenance. Foot traffic is cutting through the beds in the parking lot.

The Sunset Park site was planted in April 2011. She said it was a failed planting due to a number of reasons, including planting at the wrong time of year, poor soil conditions and poor fertility. Following that, she expanded the plant palette and left the water on to promote initial growth. The seed plant mix filled in the site well; the site extended around the playground and picnic area to minimize chemical exposure.

The Riverfront area was expanded in 2011, from Jackson to Monroe, and the planting is now denser. The Phase III section, planted in March 2013, was designed by a student, under a maple in Monroe Plaza, and features shade-tolerant varieties, and planted thinly.

She highlighted total staff hours on the project, citing time for installation and maintenance. She summed up that the time was minimal and feasible. Also, 258,201 gallons were saved (116, 919 gallons were used) as of 2013.

She related that 2.8 pounds of herbicide were applied two feet below the surface at 18<sup>th</sup> and Van Buren site. Typically, one gallon of spray covers about 1000 square feet of bare soil; there are 14,768 square feet of pesticide free beds. The pesticide savings were about 12-14 gallons (since the sites are not bare). Rehkugler added that the sites at the riverfront and near eating areas were chosen to minimize the chemical exposure. McMillin added that in general, the department seeks to minimize pesticide use.

The program reduces pesticides, water use, and minimizes labor. She said she's learned that hand watering is impractical; when converting a spray system to drip, make the entire zone the planting area; automatic water times and hoses are great; seed mixes, and dense plantings are critical; and make sure that those caring for the plants know what immature seedlings look like so they don't inadvertently remove them.

Moon said she'd found that leaf mulch was valuable, and it was free. McMillin replied that a location for storage would be needed; Geist said staff can look into it. McMillin said neighbors around parks can volunteer to take on maintenance, as long as they understand that standards must be met. Dell said they were beautiful projects and important.

Dell asked about the public education aspect, and how we can better publicize it. McMillin said there has been little publicity; it could be added to the new City website. Dell said with the new CBUF education push, we should tell the story; if CBUF can get photos and numbers on the project from McMillin, we can get the word out. McMillin said that when the beds are full around July, that would be a good time for articles. She said the only negative responses from passers-by are regarding the plant dead heads, which are retained by design.

Rehkugler asked if there was a map of the sites; McMillin said it could be created. Dell said there could be tours from the booth at the nearby Farmers Market in summer.

## **VIII. STAFF REPORTS – IF QUESTIONS**

Parks Supervisor Jude Geist related the historic Sunnyside schoolhouse was recently moved to the nearby city-owned Owens Farm. The foundation will be poured next month and the house placed on it and its roof replaced.

He related that with the recent heavy snow and ice, staff arranged addressing hazard tree pruning, removal, and cleanup; it will take several months.

Urban Forester AIC John Hinkle related that most of new trees have arrived; next Saturday they will be planted at Hayes Street, with volunteers. Most will be planted in March, when seasonal staff will arrive. He said it was not the 18" of snow that caused the damage; rather, it was the ice, but mostly just causing limb loss. A Central Park Elm was lost (the smallest) and has been removed, along with a gorgeous Cryptomeria. Most pruning and cleanup jobs have been bid out to contractors. The department now has more insured contractors and so can now respond more quickly to these storm events in the future.

Moon asked whether Cotoneasters would survive; Hinkle replied we may not know until spring if they'll survive, but they are tough, and will likely survive. There was a lot of potential for freeze damage from both of the snow events.

Geist emphasized the Sustainability Initiative Fund (SIF) funds (about \$90,000 a year) have been critical in helping Parks and Rec respond to these events. The goal is to have a \$70,000 reserve for these major events, so if the \$90,000 was exceeded, we can draw on that reserve. The SIF is a fixed amount that is part of the water bill. The funds pay for replacement plant materials, contractors' work, and for casual workers to water plants during their critical establishment period.

Hirsch asked about tree replanting at Garfield Elementary. Hinkle answered that the old trees were Purple Plums in poor condition, and have been replaced by native trees by volunteers. Hinkle said he reviewed the site and the plan before the replanting.

Rehkugler highlighted the trees covered in ivy at the corner of Harrison and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and asked if the City can get involved in them. Hinkle said the sidewalk comes up to the curb there, and so those trees are probably on private property. Moon said there is an "Ivy League" that does ivy pull removals in the region; materials are available from Extension. The ivy affects the urban forest and is a problem across the US. Dell added that it is an ongoing public education process. Hinkle noted that ivy on the trunk is not a problem, but becomes a real problem when it gets in the canopy. Passmore added that ivy's reproductive phase produces berries that get scattered.

McMillin reported that the first volunteer pruning party at the Avery Park Rose Garden was held this week.

**IX. OSU LIAISON / CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS.** None.

**X. DISCUSS MISSION/VISION/VALUES/TASKS/GOALS FOR 2014-2015.**

Citing the previous packet, #4, Sanchez asked for feedback. Moon asked about the website. Sanchez said the City site was just updated; Geist said materials are still being added back to it. Geist said Linda Hart does department web updates, based on staff input. Rehkugler suggested a subcommittee review the website periodically (quarterly); Sanchez cited #3. Geist said boards and commissions are intended to have a similar look and feel at the website. Moon said navigation was sometimes poor. Moon suggested adding “..and maintain..” (the website) under #4. Rehkugler suggested adding language regarding periodic review and giving feedback to staff; it should be easy for citizens to find. She offered to serve on a website review subcommittee; Owen asked her to work with the Education Committee on that.

Moon asked whether there were protections for trees on private property in historic districts; Geist replied that he wasn't sure, but that trees related to historic figures probably have a degree of protection. Hinkle said trees in the right-of-way have protection.

Moon asked about invasive species, saying that they were becoming more of a problem; we probably need to expand our work. The group agreed that existing language was fine. Dell said that CBUF goals needed to be part of its work plan; Rehkugler agreed we couldn't get to all of them; we have to prioritize, but it is helpful to list some of them as placeholders.

Sanchez asked about the ten-year budget. Rehkugler said we haven't made Beautification Grants recently; we should look at that, and the CBUF Endowment, in 2014. The commission has previously struggled with how to increase the endowment, such as with fundraising, in order to be able to re-start making those grants from the resulting interest. She said those grants funded civic beautification projects in the public right of way and were a good way to generate visibility for CBUF. Goslow asked staff report back on the total in the Endowment Fund. Geist reported that Finance was looking at how to administer various Endowment accounts.

Geist said he'll revise the goals with the minor changes, and bring them back to CBUF for a quick review. Rehkugler said the draft calendar needed to be brought back by staff in a finalized version.

She said CBUF needed to review the Mission; Sanchez replied that it still seemed good.

Moon reported that Garlands Nursery donated six hand tools for CBUF volunteer events.

**XI. REPORT ON SUBCOMMITTEES.** None.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.