

Tree Advisory and Education Board  
Minutes of November 8, 2023 Meeting

Attendees: Sam Bonvissuto, Rita Stevens, Linda Grandstaff, Matt Krems, David Sangree, Sarah Kepple, Bob Gorentz, Patrick Costello, Mary Kennedy, Alex Martin and resident Jack Curran

The meeting began at 6:10 pm. The minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved after a motion by Dave and second by Matt.

There was a brief update on the Most Distinguished Tree Contest and the winners in the four categories. Linda will work on certificates to be sent to all nominated tree owners.

There was a review by Rita of the meeting with Mayor George, John Story and others on the proposed tree giveaway pilot to encourage private property tree planting with support from the Arbor Day Foundation. The proposed budget is \$12,000 for spring and fall give aways of 100 trees of 1-3 gallon pots each season with tree planting and care demonstrations. The Arbor Day Foundation has turnkey support systems. A more detailed meeting with Kirsten Bouquet will be set up. The Mayor was receptive to utilizing the Gift a Tree fund to defray the cost and Mary and Rita will explore small dollar grants. Resident Outreach and volunteer raising will be explored with Trees for CLE in January. A number of organizations were identified as potential partners in resident outreach.

Matt Krems has announced that his term is ending at the end of December and he will not be continuing on the board. His participation and expertise has been very beneficial to the Board and the city and he will be missed. A new board member, Matt Bixenstine has been identified and will join the board in January.

Sam and the team provided a department update, 120 stumps have been or will be removed, gator bags will come off soon and tree planting began on November 6. David asked about larger caliper trees planted on Andrew and Gladys, which did not include deer protection. Those trees were under a different program related to sewer work and Sam will work with the team to get deer protection installed. There was a discussion of Arthur Avenue residents' protest of tree planting on tree lawns under a long standing exclusion agreement. Sam is working with the residents on the option of front yard tree plantings.

The Tree City USA Award Program which was in Beachwood. Members of the team attended. It will be in Rocky River in 2024 and the board expressed interest in participating.

A resident, Jack Curran, who joined the Zoom meeting, which is open to all residents, raised concerns about the removal of large trees in the Clifton Park neighborhood. Resident outreach opportunities will be explored to encourage private property tree plantings. There was a discussion of plantings at Madison Library which will be explored.

The meeting was adjourned at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Grandstaff, Chair/Secretary