



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2021
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

Members Present: Jonathan Elmore, Mayor
Brian Fisher, Mayor Pro Tem
Lisa Shortell, Commissioner
Lionel Laratte, Commissioner
Dee Merriam, Commissioner

Staff Present: Patrick Bryant, City Manager
Paul Hanebuth, Asst. City Manager
Shannon Powell, Asst. City Manager
Gina Hill, City Clerk
Stephen Quinn, City Attorney

Item #1 Meeting Called to Order

Item #2 Adoption of Agenda
Mayor Pro Tem Fisher moved to adopt. Commissioner Shortell seconded. All ayes.

Item #3 **Tree Ordinance Modifications**
Discussion will continue about ways to modify the current ordinance in addition to adding language clarifying a desire to keep the City's canopy coverage at or above 50-percent. Tree permits and the tree list may also be touched upon.

Mayor Elmore started the discussion about the Tree Board and the potential of combining it with the Arboretum Board. He asked city staff to figure out how to property do that and see if the Tree Board applicants would be ok with that. He then outlined a proposed process for filling the seven seats. Commissioner Merriam was supportive and wanted to see a broader green space board to reduce any and all overlap. She added that she'd like to see such a board govern memorials like memorial trees in a more proactive way. Commissioner Laratte, Mayor Pro Tem Fisher, and Commissioner Shortell were also supportive of combining the boards. The group discussed boards asking for volunteers and what process would be required. It was decided to call the new board the Arboretum Board. Talk turned to tree removal. Mr. Elmore praised Decatur's system of using an app to notify the city of a tree removal. Ms. Shortell was supportive of some kind of tree removal notification. Mr. Fisher felt this had become way to complicated to solve a problem that doesn't exist. Discussion continued about various options to track tree removal. Assistant City Manager

Hanebuth proposed asking tree companies for invoices for work in the city. Discussion continued about various options for changing the tree ordinance. Ms. Merriam had some issues with trees on the tree list. The group also talked about ideal percentages of canopy coverage in the central business district versus the residential area. City Manager Bryant summarized the decisions made and actions city staff will take. City Attorney Quinn also had questions to confirm what was wanted in the ordinance.

Item #4 **Available Board Seats**

The time frame to apply for open seats on the Tree Board and Planning, Architecture and Zoning Board ended August 31st. The BOMC will discuss next steps.

City Manager Bryant explained that there were applicants to the Tree Board and the PAZB. He asked if the board wanted to go ahead and fill those seats or wait until other board openings were filled later in the year. The consensus was to wait until other board openings were filled.

Item #5 **Banbury Cross Pathway Proposals**

City Manager Bryant described the two proposals received for different styles of path. He added that the county will, at some point, replace the sewer line in that area. Mayor Elmore was in favor of the less expensive solution for that reason. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher asked City Attorney Quinn if the county would fix any damage to the path done while replacing the sewer line. Mr. Quinn said that should not be an expectation. Mr. Fisher agreed with Mr. Elmore. Commissioner Shortell also agreed and said she was hesitant to invest in golf cart infrastructure in that area. Commissioner Merriam favored the cheaper option. She also requested more stations to dispose of dog waste. Mr. Bryant said if the Board was agreeable, he would move forward on the request for the dog waste stations.

Item #6 **Initial Discussion of Potential Senior Tax Exemption**

Mayor Elmore said he requested this be on the agenda. He added that it was best to await census numbers that will be released in early 2022 so they could know how many people in the city would qualify for tax breaks. Mr. Elmore also said that DeKalb County offers many various exemptions that residents might want to look into. Commissioner Laratte listed several questions he'd like to see addressed, such as whether or not income would be considered. City Manager Bryant said that would be part of the options city staff would offer the BOMC once census numbers are available. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher is concerned about that impact on the city's budget. He noted the city has a lower millage rate but property values have risen. Commissioner Merriam remarked that the level of city services should also be part of the conversation. Mr. Elmore offered that he would like to see Avondale Estates as a city that people could afford at all life stages.

Item #7 Public Comment

Patricia Calcagno had some questions about combining the Tree Board and Arboretum Board.

Item #8

Adjournment

Commissioner Shortell moved to adjourn. Commissioner Laratte seconded. All ayes.

APPROVED ON OCTOBER 28, 2021


Gina Hill, City Clerk