

Tree Committee Meeting Minutes Approved December 18, 2019

City of Hood River Tree Committee
November 19, 2019

Meeting location: City of Hood River Fire Hall

Present: Dan Ball, Tim Counihan, Kathy Jubitz, Tina Lassen, Rick Peargin

Absent: Jacquie Barone, Tyler Roth

Standing meeting time and place: Dan asked what time of day would work best for the group for the Tree Committee's monthly meeting. Mornings and evenings are challenging for those with kids.

Dan suggested we try a lunchtime meeting, although City Council chambers are often booked. Tina made a motion that we hold monthly meetings the third Wednesday of the month at noon, at the Fire Hall, pending availability. Kathy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Contact information: Dan provided all committee members with a contact list of members' email addresses and phone numbers. It is intended for member use only, not for public posting on the City of Hood River website.

Heritage Tree program: People have nominated trees over the years, but there's no official documentation in any city records. Kathy suggested that formalizing this become a priority for the committee.

2020 Policy Projects: Dan reviewed the 2020 projects identified at the November 5 meeting at the Hood River Library. (These are described in greater detail in the 11/5 meeting minutes.) The list of 2020 proposed policy projects was refined by Rick and Dan after the 11/5 meeting, and sent to City Manager Rachael Fuller. Dan emphasized that these are specifically policy suggestions, not the Tree Committee "to do" list.

The final list is:

1. Approve the new Street Tree list.

Dan said that, according to Planning Director Dustin Nilsen, the Street Tree list been sent to the Oregon Department of Urban Forestry and we are awaiting response. Kathy indicated that the long delay on approving the list has been an ongoing source of frustration with the committee, and that Tree Committee members have resigned over the issue. Tim is going to follow up with Dustin. Dan noted that the Tree List had been open to public comment and none was received.

2. Update Hood River Municipal Code 13.12 (Vegetation in and adjacent to City Rights of Way).

Dan suggested we make this discussion an agenda item for the next Tree Committee meeting. Tim suggested Dan send the current municipal code to each member, and that we all review it prior to the next meeting.

3. Establish an ordinance in the Hood River Municipal Code to protect trees on private property.

Tim noted that he had brief discussions on this topic with Councilor Eric Haynie, who is a supporter of some type of tree-protection ordinance.

Communications: Dan summarized a discussion from the last meeting, indicating that the Tree Committee needs better communication and higher visibility within City government. He suggested we invite city officials to Tree Committee meetings. Tina recommended Tree Committee members consider speaking at City Council if there are specific projects and activities the committee wishes to bring to their attention. Dan said he did speak at the last City Council meeting, to let them know the group is active after a short hiatus. Tim noted that he is the City Council representative, and will update the Council on Tree Committee activities. Tina said she will do the same with Planning Commission.

The committee discussed how to address concerns or frustrations. The committee agreed is better to have discussions in person, rather than via email or social media. Tim emphasized that emails become city record, so encouraged the committee to follow proper communication channels.

Arbor Day: The committee discussed how to commemorate Arbor Day. In an email, Jacque suggested planting a tree in honor of Steve Gates, who is battling cancer. Dan will talk with Jacque further about the idea.

Tyler also indicated in an email that he had Hiroshima-surviving ginko trees (or perhaps seeds?) The committee will follow up on this at the next meeting.

Website: Dan shared the new City of Hood River website. The committee discussed how we want to populate the new Tree Committee page. Ideas included the tree list and various links, such as one to a US Department of Agriculture tree species page. Tina inquired about who does the “back-end” work on the website to add information. Rick said he believes it is done by each department, and is going to verify who handles the Public Works part of the website. Dan says Jacque has a good file of online materials that we might review for links. The Tree Committee will review any materials we wish to use and seek appropriate copyright approvals.

Tree City USA application: Dan passed out a draft of the Tree City USA application prepared by Ann Frodel. Tim asked Dan to share the requirements for the Tree City USA application via email.

Kathy moved that we adjourn the meeting at 9:35. Dan seconded.