

Decorah Tree Board

November 16, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeremy Brill at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers.

Present: Jeremy Brill, Mark Faldet, Dick Guilgot, Peter van der Linden, City Manager Chad Bird, and City Forester Robin Sailor. Parks and Recreation Director Andy Nimrod attended a portion of the meeting.

MOTION by Guilgot, second by van der Linden: to approve the minutes of the October 26 meeting as circulated. Motion carried.

The budget for FY 2019 was discussed. There was consensus among the Board members that increases are needed to 1) provide matching funds for grant proposals and 2) accommodate increasing costs for the tree voucher program. Bird asked that requests in these two areas be submitted separately. It was agreed that the Board would request \$4,000 for each (\$8,000 total).

A discussion of the City's tree ordinance followed. Sailor is responsible for boulevard trees under section 12.40.030 of the ordinance, but she is not always consulted when property owners remove or prune trees. As an example, she cited a large maple in the boulevard on Broadway Street that was improperly pruned (topped) by a contractor. How can her authority be enforced?

Bird noted that section 12.40.040 D, which deals with pruning permits for utility companies, could be amended to include tree service companies.

It was agreed that Decorah should provide more public education about the tree ordinance. Bird suggested a "Lunch and Learn" program on the subject.

Trees killed by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) during the next few years will be expensive for the City and property owners to remove. Bird reported that the City of Marion has instituted a "tree utility" similar to the new stormwater utility in Decorah. If a tree utility were established here, property owners could be assessed to provide funds for removal and replacement of infested ash trees. The utility could be subject to a sunset clause so that it no longer existed after the EAB epidemic passed.

In the meantime, the City may wish to budget more funds for tree removal. Bird suggested that the Tree Board submit a third budget proposal for that expense.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Peter van der Linden, Secretary