

Tree Code Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) – Josh Ward, Community Conservation Planner; Mark Grueber, Community Forester; Erin Shank, Urban Wildlife Biologist

City of Wildwood – Joe Vujnich, Director of Planning; Travis Newberry, Senior Planner; and Robyn Keefe, Planner

Notes:

Joe Vujnich – Initial Comments

- Proximity to MDC properties
 - No requirement that comments be incorporated
 - Give more input to MDC
- Look into timber sales and Timber Management Plan
- Seeking comment on “Grand Trees”

Specific input into Code changes

- Recommends language adjustments, i.e. “timber management” to “forest management.”
- Grand Trees are not “one size fits all”
 - Suggest adding more room for expert subjectivity
- Tree replacement has not worked well
 - Suggest determining “intent” and making adjustments accordingly
 - Replacing trees with non-native trees can ultimately cause more harm than good from an ecological perspective
 - Suggest putting more emphasis on maintenance vs. replacement
- Tree banking
 - MDC supports, however, need to look at the success of other cities in standing up to legal challenges
 - Consider a “maintenance fund” (“street tree fund” discussed by staff)
 - Mark Gueber to provide names of cities to talk to about tree banking
- Tree Canopy Coverage – is it working?
 - Suggest linking canopy coverage to areas of the site that need it most for stormwater management and erosion control
- Ultimately want to minimize disturbance, period. Mitigation only when necessary.
- Potentially incorporate bat guidelines and regulations (see Federal regulations, though note Mark’s opposition to regs concerning “hazard trees” that need to come down right away)

Big Picture

- Suggests more incentives and less directives
 - Look into land trusts
 - Provide funding for invasive removal or volunteers
 - Provide professional services (Weldon Springs looking into this)
- Community acknowledgement of the economic, ecological and social benefits of trees
- Contracting forestry services vs. hiring a City Forester
 - Contractor
 - Pros
 - More specialized knowledge
 - Has all the equipment, which is a significant investment
 - Cons
 - Only two companies currently competitive in invasive species management and native landscaping (large scale)
 - City Forester
 - Pros
 - Built in support and education for private landowners
 - Monitor forestry management in specific areas
 - Daily work – inspections, oversight, etc.
 - Staff a “Tree Board”
 - Cons
 - Less networked/specialized
 - Significant cost of equipment, benefits, etc.
- Municipal Tree Management Plans
 - Mark not overly impressed
 - Very basic information and usually a part of a tree inventory
- Crestwood Park Planning Process

Natural Resource Inventory

- Highly recommended
- GIS component
- Help us identify sensitive areas to protect
- What do we have currently? What does this information tell us?
- Provides the foundation for any planning effort or Code change
- Josh Ward
 - Can help find funding for consulting work
 - Could potentially provide in-house support

Invasive Management Plan

- Highly recommended – Wildwood would be the first and provide a “Model” to other communities
- Josh could get us connected to the [MO Invasive Species Taskforce](#) and [STL BioDiverse Cities](#) group for assistance in this effort
- Funding from MDC is as a cost share, leverage to tap Missouri Municipal League funding (Municipal Parks Grant Commission) and other potential sources to layer on top (MDC would coordinate)
- Check out [Grow Native](#) resources, including invasive species educations, programs and plans
- Maryland Heights has an [invasive species ordinance](#)
- [St. Louis Audubon – Bring Conservation Home program](#)
 - Fees less if Wildwood is participating
 - Wildwood could pay the fee for private landowners as an incentive
 - The Bring Conservation Home Program will offer advice in:
 - landscaping with environmentally healthy and sustainable native plant species
 - the removal of invasive plant species such as bush honeysuckle
 - water conservation for urban landscapes, and
 - other stewardship practices that promote healthy habitat for birds, native wildlife and people.
 - NOTE FROM WEBSITE: We are not currently accepting requests for consultations. We are delighted to see a recent influx of interest in the program and we are doing everything we can to increase our capacity to fulfill a large number of requests. Please check back with us in Spring of 2022.
- [Small grant program – MDC Cost Share](#)
 - 10 acre minimum, but can package lots together to reach 10 acres (subdivision approach – need buy-in from property owners)

TRIM Grant

- No application, rolling basis
- Work with Mark Grueber – everyone reviews

Next Steps

- Mark to share comments on the Tree Code
- Mark point of contact, will rope others in as necessary