CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APPROVED

MEMBERS
Timothy McLellan, Chairman
William Zaskey, Vice-Chairman
James Tillotson
Gerry Roy
John Vieau

MINUTES March 4, 2013

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held on March 4, 2013 at 6:30PM in the Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

Members Present

McLellan, Tillotson, Roy, Zaskey

Members Absent

Vieau

Also Present

Councilor Zygarowski, Councilor Laflamme, Dan Garvey (Assistant City Solicitor), Carl Dietz (Community Development Director), Lee Pouliot (Planner & Administrator Community Development), Kate Brown (Planning Director), Chris Scott (General Foreman DPW).

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

ITEM#1

ORDERED THAT the City Council accept the Department of Conservation and Recreation Urban and Community Forestry Grant in the amount of \$23,500.00 in accordance with MGL Chapter 44 Section 53A.

Councilor McLellan stated this is for DPW to help manage the trees and help forecast their needs in the future.

Lee Pouliot stated the end result is we will be able to have a management for these guys so there not running around guessing where they have issues. When we go out and collect data some of the criteria we will list are tree health then that report is brought back and generated and we can have a prioritized list of the most crucial tree work that needs to be done immediately because of a safety hazard. There are some things we can work with community volunteers to do such as; newly planted trees and basic pruning.

Councilor Tillotson asked is this grant fully reimbursable.

Lee Pouliot answered yes. The end result for this grant for us is to end up with this inventory and a management plan to move forward with.

Stan Kulig stated most of the time we just act in crisis mode; this Grant will hopefully get us to the point where we can have a management tool. We really haven't been doing enough planting in the past years to replace what we've taken down. We really need to look at some spots where we can replace those trees and get that urban forest back in some areas which will add value to neighborhoods and homes. We are also talking about putting together some volunteers and starting a nursery.

Chris Scott stated for what we're paying for one tree we could plant fifty trees and the students can replant them where there's a need for them.

Councilor Zygarowski asked how long before we are reimbursed for this.

Lee Pouliot answered we have to ask for any reimbursements by the end of June 2013.

Councilor Roy asked what is the Arborist's responsibilities.

Lee Pouliot answered there are a number of Arborists that have done these inventories on behalf of Municipalities everywhere. What we are going to do is tap into their resources.

The Arborist will have all the equipment already that we need. The Arborist is the training, oversight and they will generate the report for us.

Councilor Roy asked how do you put a monetary value on this.

Lee Pouliot answered we will be able to tell when we input all of the public trees that we inventory based on an average statistic; how much water we're keeping out of our storm water system ect. We also know and we can calculate the value on heating and cooling reductions on a building based on shade provided by a tree. While the system is set up to give you a monetary value, it's just an estimate and it's more for to try to communicate the importance of trees verses an actual replacement value. It's just meant to say this tree at this size providing these services would be valued at this price.

Councilor Roy stated whether there's a report on the trees or not it's going to stop the same amount of water or give you the same amount of shade.

Chris Scott stated When you buy a piece of equipment or add another person to the labor force it's an investment in the city and by having that dollar value assigned to the urban forest you know if it's worth the investment. The trees are worth dollars to the city as they provide a tangible dollar amount to the city in benefits and that's why they assign a value to them.

Public Input

Victoria Connor, 51 Helen Street stated I belong to a group called 350.org. 350 stands for the particles per million that is safe for humanity of carbon in the atmosphere and right now we are at 392 parts per million. I hope enough people are not denying the climate change anymore because we're all starting to see some very serious impacts around the world. For me it's important to get this grant as a way to increase or replace the trees that we've lost. Trees expel oxygen, they create shade and as Mr. Tillotson said they cut air condition cost about thirty percent. There is a carbon cost in the planting and maintaining of trees but a ninety five percent gain. We have a moral responsibility to make our cities more sustainable with respect to the climate. One acre of trees consumes as much carbon as one car going twenty six thousand miles. A leafy green tree can give you back as much oxygen as much as ten people breathe in a year.

Councilor Laflamme asked how will this work with Chicopee Electric Light with regards to how much they spend and trimming of trees; how will this work with DPW.

Stan Kulig answered they're separate functions here, they have their own programs and requirements for tree clearance because of wires and they'll continue to do that. What we have been doing and we will continue doing is as we re-forest and re-plant we won't be planting those kinds of trees so they'll be doing a lot less trimming then they're doing now. We started on a path years ago looking at what trees should be planted and where. This system will be a tool that we can use with Chicopee Electric Light to target potential liability and potential problem trees.

Chris Scott stated as I become the tree warden I would like to establish a little more of a relationship with Chicopee Electric Light. I do have experience with Utility Arbor culture and I see things that can be done a little differently.

Councilor McLellan stated we can request that Chicopee Electric Light be brought in on our next meeting once you have the information.

Stan Kulig validated that Chicopee Electric Light needs to be present at the next meeting.

Councilor Roy asked is there a tree committee.

Councilor McLellan answered the Council has to create the ordinance to have a tree committee.

Councilor Roy stated I just had reservations about having to go through a committee first if we had to take down a tree.

Stan Kulig stated we're not going to try and circumvent state law. When it comes to removal of trees under state law it's vested in the Tree Warden.

Councilor Tillotson stated that I would like to have a tree inventory so I could make a better decision as to what we're going to be doing.

Recommend that the City Council accept the Community Forestry Grant of \$23,500.00

Committee vote: 4-0 favorable

ITEM#2

Minutes for March 12, 2012 Motion to accept -- Motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.