

FORESTRY ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES – June 16, 2020

In attendance:

Doug Wiles	Christy Ames-Davis	Amy Sakariassen	Stan Churchill
Doug Prchal	Carolyn Godfread	Dave Mayer	

Absent:

Mitch Becker	Erik Dietrich	Greg Zenker	Mark Zimmerman
Brett Gurholt			

The meeting was called to order by Doug Wiles at 12:15 p.m.

Approval of the minutes from the September 17, 2019 regular meeting of the FAB:

There was no quorum so minutes approval was tabled until the next meeting.

Forestry Update:

Pruning completed to date: 1,256 trees pruned by Forestry crews and 250 trees pruned by our contractor, Beaver Creek Tree Service. We are on target to meet our 3,000 trees pruned annual goal. Forestry crews have completed the unit west of 26th Street and will move on to their next unit in the fall. Beaver Creek has finished up the area north of Divide and west of Washington. They will continue on in the area east of 26th Street between Rosser Ave and Crocus Ave.

Elm firewood surveys went great. There was good compliance, one was late, but did get done recently. To date there have been 6 positive Dutch elm disease (DED) cases this year. Four were boulevard trees and two were park trees.

Tree risk assessments didn't get done this spring due to Covid19. The plan is to do those assessments this fall.

Cankerworm Aerial Spraying RFP report:

Cankerworm spraying was completed by Airborne Custom Spraying on June 1st. The spray area was west of Washington Street along the river corridor. 2,055 acres were covered including 950 acres of parks property. The cost of spraying was \$86,000. The chemical sprayed was Foray 48B, whose active ingredient is Bacillus thuringiensis subspecies kurstaki (Btk). Btk is environmentally safe and naturally eliminates the cankerworms but is harmless to pets, wildlife and humans. The application was completed in approximately 4 hours. The contractor was very helpful as to figuring out timing of the spraying. We waited as long as possible to cover all phases of cankerworm growth. The spraying appears to have been very effective. Doug W. stated if he had to do over again, he would have done more outreach with the media, interviews and such. We only received about 10 calls of concern regarding the spraying. Cankerworm spraying was last completed in 2007.

Grants to be executed this summer:

The grant for planting 100 trees along University Drive is almost complete. Forestry staff has planted around 80 trees with 20 left to go. We are waiting on the nursery to receive the additional trees. Existing planting beds were filled in starting south of Denver Ave along the walking path. Additionally, street trees

were added to both sides of the street beginning at American Ave and continuing to S 12th Street. Delta Hackberry, Cathedral Elm, Prairie Horizon Elm, Bur Oak, Prairie Stature Oak, Prairie Torch Buckeye (no longer in production, hard to find), Honeylocust, and Coffeetree were some of the species planted.

Parks received two tree planting grants. One is for planting 75 trees at McDowell Dam; Parks staff is completing this planting. The other grant is for General Sibley park. 230 trees will be planted by Forestry staff at this location. Species include Ironwood, Alder, Silver Maple, Cathedral Elm, Honeylocust, Coffeetree, Siouxland Poplar, and Balsam Poplar.

Forestry did not apply for any grants this year (to be executed in 2021) due to uncertainty surrounding Covid19. Parks has applied for a tree planting grant for New Generation Park to replace some existing poor condition trees, as well as adding new trees.

Arbor Day 2020:

Our annual Arbor Day event was postponed due to Covid19. We hope to still have a tree planting dedication ceremony recognizing Greg Smith, retired Parks and Rec Operations Director, sometime in September. The event will take place at Optimist Park.

An Arbor Day ceremony is a requirement for Tree City USA Recognition, but this requirement has been relaxed this year. So, if for some reason, we are unable to hold the event we would still remain Tree City USA.

FAB Member terms expiring in 2019, 2020:

No action was taken on this item since there was not a quorum.

Committee Reports:

No reports.

Other items:

Tree planting permit requests and private tree inspections seem to have increased this year probably due to more people being home.

The Downtowners received a grant to plant 4 of the raised planting beds in the downtown area with pollinator plants. The planting was done on June 12th.

European elm scale has been hitting Bismarck's elm trees pretty hard recently. It is quite noticeable in the Cathedral District where there is a large concentration of elm. Scale feeding can cause stunted, chlorotic leaves, premature leaf drop, and branch dieback. Black sooty mold growing on honeydew secretions can blacken infested limbs. Scale will not kill the tree, but some will continue to decline and may require removal in the future.

Unfortunately, chemical treatment is not in the budget. Treatment would average around \$300 per tree and would need to be done to thousands of trees. Some money will be available for treatment in 2021 targeting some of the younger elm trees on Washington Street and on Boulevard Avenue. There has been some evidence of biological control with ladybugs, but would need to be done on a large scale to really be effective.

Forestry's budget for 2021 will stay about the same, it is not likely we will gain approval to fill our 4th full time arborist position. Doubling our contract pruning budget has been proposed to try to fill the gap.

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Forestry Advisory Board is scheduled for September 15th.