

# FORESTRY ADVISORY BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES – August 16, 2022

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### In attendance:

Brett Gurholt  
Dawn Kopp

Amy Sakariassen  
Doug Wiles

Doug Prchal  
Christy Ames-Davis

Mitch Becker

### Absent:

Erik Dietrich  
Anne Cleary

Carolyn Godfread

Stan Churchill

Andrew Jordan

Chairman Doug Prchal called the meeting to order at 12:27 p.m.

### Approval of the minutes from the May 16, 2022 regular meeting of the FAB

Chairman Doug Prchal called for approval of the minutes from the May 16<sup>th</sup> FAB meeting. Dawn Kopp moved to approve the minutes; Amy Sakariassen seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

### 2022 Pruning Contract Update

Beaver Creek Tree Service is in the second year of a potential 3-year contract and has completed Unit 1 of contract pruning for this year. Unit 1 was finishing up the area south of Bismarck Expy and west of Washington St that was started in 2021. They have also completed the first portion of Unit 2, which is the Grandview area of town. They have now moved north from Grandview, continuing pruning west of Tyler Pkwy and south of Canyon Dr.

The contract areas chosen typically have a very specific size class of trees, which allows the contractor to move quickly, and keep costs low. On the current contract we are getting about 700 trees pruned per year.

### European Elm Scale Treatment Program Update

Forestry was given a budget of \$200,000 in 2022 to treat elm trees throughout the City for European Elm Scale (EES). A request for proposal (RFP) for tree injection was put out early this year, and Paul Bunyan Nursery received the contract with a low bid of \$3.93 per diameter inch of each tree. Based on that estimate the RFP contained about 1175 trees in 4 project areas to be injected. Some of those trees were removed from the injection list as they were too far gone to inject and were scheduled to be removed. Once the 4 project areas were completed the total bill was \$122,232.41.

With the remaining funds we have been able to add two more project areas. The contractor is currently working in Project Area 5. Once both additional areas are complete the contractor will continue working east of 16<sup>th</sup> St as far as the budget allows. Forestry will be working on injecting elm trees in Highland Acres for the remainder of this year. All elm trees in the public right of way should be injected by the end of 2023.

One application/injection should offer protection to the tree for 2 years. Hopefully we will pull out of the drought cycle soon and trees vigor will improve from the added moisture too. We will look at possibly doing another injection cycle in 4 years depending on how trees are looking. Homeowners can still put out lacewings as another measure of control, but not in the same year the tree was injected as

the chemical will kill the beneficial insects. We also continue to recommend keeping trees well watered; as this helps the overall health of tree and makes it easier for the tree to fight EES.

### **Partners In Planting (PIP) Update**

We have 13 PIP sponsors for 2022. Three of the sponsors are new, with donations totaling \$13,500. To date, 60 property owners have been served by the program, 138 trees have been rebated for a total of \$10,753.64 in rebates so far this year. With the removal of most maple species from the approved tree list this spring, we have seen maple tree planting numbers down overall, with only 8 of the 138 trees rebated so far being maple species. Christy stated she has not received any kickback regarding the removal of most maple species from the approved tree list. The top 4 species rebated so far this year are Japanese Lilac, Linden, Elm and Crabapple. Doug W stated that surplus PIP funds roll over and stay in the fund. He would like to do a planting with surplus funds in the coming years, adding trees to main arterials that are lacking trees. This would benefit the City as a whole and not just certain neighborhoods. Forestry reached out to long time PIP sponsors about this idea and did not receive any objection to the idea.

The number of tree planting permits issued this year is in line with past years. Between 250 and 300 permits are issued each year for boulevard tree planting. The total number of boulevard trees planted this year should be quite high with the addition of two new elementary schools and completion of 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave east of State Street. Those projects alone should add over 400 trees to our boulevard tree inventory.

### **Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Update**

To date this year, 31 elm trees have tested positive for DED. 15 of those have been boulevard trees. This number is a bit higher than last year, when it was difficult to get positive DED test results possibly due to the dry and scale covered branches we were getting for samples. Our crew is caught up on DED removals right now. In addition to the DED removals, @100 boulevard elm trees have been slated for removal due to being 50% dead or more. This number is down from last year by around 50 trees.

The crew will also be removing numerous dead elm in Lion's Hillside Park this year. Parks and Rec was recently awarded a grant to replace trees in Lion's Hillside Park. There will be about 120 new trees planted next year in the west half of park, which is irrigated.

### **2022 Storm Response**

We experienced two significant wind events this summer, one on June 15 and the other on June 20. About 170 work orders were generated between those two events. Clean up took a couple weeks. Having 4 arborists on staff is working well, however, we were only able to hire one grounds person this year so that slows things down a little. We continue to have some random storm damage popping up, but unless they are an immediate hazard, the crew addresses them as time allows. It is not an efficient use of time to go out for individual broken branches throughout town as traveling to the job, set up, and clean up all take time.

### **Bismarck's 150<sup>th</sup> Tree Planting Project**

Former Mayor, Steve Bakken, came up with the idea for a 150<sup>th</sup> tree planting project/ Sesquicentennial Forest to coincide with Bismarck's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. The project is still moving forward. The project will take place at New Generations Park in NW Bismarck. Doug W has been working with Park Commissioner, Mark Zimmerman, to organize this event. Bismarck Parks and Rec and the Farwest Rotary (their park) are partners on the project. They, along with the Boy Scouts of America, will participate in the tree planting. Prairie View Landscaping and Nursery will provide the trees for the

project at cost and will also pre-dig the planting holes. The plant material will be a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees. \$13,000 has been committed to the project. This includes money from a ND Forest Service grant, and a \$5,000 contribution from the Farwest Rotary Club. The in-kind match will be labor and supplies. Parks and Rec will take care of the watering and upkeep of the trees. A plaque commemorating the event will be installed on a large boulder in the park.

The tentative date for the event is Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. With all the volunteers the planting should go fast. Food will be provided after the planting is complete. FAB members are welcome and encouraged to participate. The FAB will be notified of the exact date and time prior to the event.

### **Forestry Division Budget 2023**

All requested budget items have been approved preliminarily. Large items include the addition of a grade 12 employee that will be a permanent ground person to work with crew. The contract pruning budget will also see an increase from \$90,000 to \$120,000.

### **Other Items**

Forestry was recently awarded a grant from the NDFS to develop and purchase new promotional materials for next year. These items include little backpacks, rulers, erasers and the like to hand out to children at various events including Arbor Day. We are coming to the end of our existing promotional materials.

The FAB's new park commissioner member, Andrew Jordan, has asked if we would consider moving our meeting time. He is the school superintendent in Wilton and can't make the noon meetings. Doug W told him he would ask for input from the board. FAB members in attendance discussed having the meeting after hours and agreed the noon meeting time works best for the board as a whole and did not wish to move the time of the meeting. Zoom or Microsoft Teams were discussed as options to consider for Andrew to be able to attend the meetings virtually. Doug W will contact Andrew and get his thoughts.

Due to upcoming construction on the Public Works building, future meetings will likely have to move to a different location. Dawn and Brett both stated they have conference rooms at their places of business that could be used.

There were no other items for discussion and the meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.