

Agenda
Prairie Village Environmental/Recycling Committee

11-28-12

Call to order – Pete Jarchow or Anne-Marie Hedge

Reports

Community Garden report – Thomas O'Brien and Nicolas Garcia

Earth Fair – Karin and others

Old Business

Clarify committee work and make plans to meet

New Business

Dennis on preparation for invasion of the emerald ash borer

Model food composting program for Normandy Square

PRAIRIE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLE COMMITTEE

Minutes, October 24, 2012

Pete Jarchow, for the steering committee, called the meeting to order at 7pm. Attending were Pete, Polly Swafford, Kathy Riordan, Dennis Enslinger, Ashley Weaver, Deborah English, Thomas O'Brien, Margaret Goldstein, Penny Mahon, Sarah Garcia, Anne-Marie Hedge and supporting member, Mary English.

The minutes were approved as written.

Reports and business.

- **Community Forum**

- Kathy Riordan gave a final, detailed report on the Forum.
- 42 people accessed the on-line payment form. 75 sent snail mail.
- 134 suppers were served, making \$2555 income and a bill of \$2520 for the Bluebird Café. Jane suggested using tickets to keep track of people for dinner. This means giving people tickets for dinner when they check in, and then they surrender them in the dinner line. Jane charged \$18/plate.
- Our committee expenses: printing = \$142, church = \$97, postage = \$202, Guests = \$160. Have to write check to KNRC for the \$160.
- Have to decide who will head the committee next year, and what the topic will be.
- Note: we have to be out of the church by 8:30pm, so the forum can't run overtime.
- Program should be decided by April-May at the latest and be timely.
- Reserved October 3, 2013 for next forum.
- Kathy asked for comments. Deb suggested a follow-up e-mail for feedback. Dennis suggested we do Survey Monkey. Tom agreed to do this. The issue of charging for dinner and keeping the talk free was discussed. Decided to keep it the way it is.

Reports were stopped to allow our guest speaker, Mary English, to present her talk, "Residential Green: Trends and Efficiency" She discussed the pros and cons of all the methods we use to retrofit our homes to save energy. The most efficient is weatherization. She also discussed the HERS score, home energy rating system, to get the most accurate overview of our home's energy efficiency. Her web page is [www: smallstepenergy.com](http://www.smallstepenergy.com).

Reports resumed.

- **Community Garden**

- Tom reported that cleanup of the gardens was underway, bylaws have been undated, and the leadership decided. Decision about the removal of the elm tree is still pending.

- **Earth Fair: No report.**

Old business.

The status of Bennet Park was discussed. Ashley wonders if it is truly chemical free. Can we do soil testing and would the committee pay the \$540 needed for this. Tom said we should have some way to back up our statement that the park is chemical free. Dennis suggested we ask Public Works what is

meant by chemical -free? Are fertilizers included? Further discussion included: How could we be sure the soil test is representative of the entire Park and half-life of pesticides. Since a good dialogue with Public Works is important, we can ask Bruce McNabb back in January. In mean time, the archives will be checked to see how this all started, and perhaps ask Lindsay Mohn for more details. Sarah will also ask her soil teacher for information. This discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Deb suggested we have a handout about the committee available for new members. Margaret G. reported that 3 people signed up at the Forum to visit our meetings.

New business.

Dennis E. had 3 issues to present.

- Training in recycling in Public Works has not been set up yet, hopefully by January.
- A HUD grant enabled 250 LED street lights to be installed in the city. MARC is required to have a meeting with this committee and other community groups to get feedback. This meeting will be in the community center, and Dennis will let us know the particulars.
- Expenditure item: Would the committee be willing to split the cost of food collections bins for Normandy Square? In a program with JC solid waste and Deffenbaugh, Normandy Square is being used as a test subject to test collection of food waste. Dennis will report back with the cost to the committee. This could come out of the \$5000 allocated for e-recycling expenditures.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Next meeting is November 28, 2012 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne-Marie Hedge (substituting for Karin McAdams)



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Council Committee Meeting Date: November 5, 2012

COU2012-48: CONSIDER THE EMERALD ASH BORER TREE INFESTATION ISSUE AND PROVIDE INITIAL DIRECTION TO CITY STAFF

REQUESTS

The City Tree Board requested that this issue be presented to City Council. City staff requests that City Council provide initial direction regarding the key policy question of responsibility for street trees.

BACKGROUND

As you may have read in local media, the emerald ash borer, a small insect that kills ash trees, has recently been identified in the KC metro area. It is difficult to detect the borer until it has attacked a tree and at that point it is too late to save the tree.

This issue was raised at the September City Tree Board meeting by Member Greg Van Booven who is a Certified Arborist and the City's current contractor for tree trimming and removal. Greg has volunteered to assist in the presentation of background information to City Council.

The City's inventory of trees on City property and along City streets shows a total of 737 ash trees in the total City inventory of approximately 9400 trees. 77 of these trees are located in City parks, on City islands and on other City property. The City is responsible for these trees and options for handling these trees will be presented in the near future. The estimated City costs to handle these **City owned** trees range from \$ 42,500 to \$ 85,000 over the next 10 years.

The remaining 660 ash trees in the inventory are along City streets (street trees). They represent approximately 8.5% of all street trees in the City. The ash trees are located throughout the City but are concentrated in some areas. 413 (62.5%) of these street ash trees are located on 18 street segments. (A street segment is a section of a street which usually includes several City blocks.)

If ash trees become infected with the emerald ash borer, they will die. However, it is possible to treat the trees in advance to save the trees. The treatment program is somewhat expensive and must be repeated to remain effective. Treatments are most effective if they are done in the spring.

According to current State law, City Code and City Council policy, the maintenance of trees, including any treatment for infestations, is the responsibility of the tree owner, which is the adjacent property owner. The City removes dead and dying trees, replants new trees, removes hazardous branches and has a periodic trimming program.

Therefore, the threshold question at this point is whether the City Council wants to modify current City policy to provide treatment to these ash trees along City streets and possibly other problems with other trees in the future.

Regardless of whether City policy is changed, the City's response to the emerald ash borer will have a significant financial impact to City government. Rough estimates (conservative/low) of the City's 10 year costs for contractual services to deal with the effects of the emerald ash borer range from \$400,000 to more than \$ 720,000, based on assumptions about the general condition of these trees, average tree size, current contractual prices, etc. There will be additional costs for staff time to manage these programs and additional temporary resources may be needed.

If no changes are made in City policy, the estimated 10 year costs for a private property owner to have one ash tree inspected and treated is approximately \$1000. It might be difficult to force private property owners to treat their ash trees.

If it is determined that the City should take over responsibility for this aspect of maintaining the street ash trees, staff will present options to the Tree Board and City Council regarding the number of trees to be treated, possible schedules and associated costs.

The primary **advantages** of the City taking over this responsibility are the preservation of more of the existing ash trees, fewer and slower impacts to ash trees on private property and all of the associated benefits of more healthy trees including aesthetics, reduced soil erosion, and other environmental benefits. These benefits are shared among the adjacent property owner, the neighborhood and the entire City. The primary **disadvantages** of taking over this responsibility are the costs and possibly the expectation that the City will also respond in a similar manner to the next similar situation that arises some time in future.

At this point the only known city in Johnson County that is embarking on a proactive ash tree preservation program for street trees is the City of Fairway.

If City Council takes no action, the responsibility for maintenance will remain with the private property owner. City staff can attempt to notify these residents to make sure that they know they own an ash tree along the street and point them toward additional information resources.

In order to complete the analysis of all options, City staff needs direction from City Council on this issue.

FUNDING SOURCE

There are no specific funds budgeted for a response to this issue in the 2012 or 2013 City Budgets. Funding would have to come from the City's General Contingency Funds or could be budgeted in the 2014 City Budget.

RELATION TO VILLAGE VISION

CC1 Attractive Environment

CC1a Make streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and attractiveness of the public realm.

CCS2 Parks and Green Space

CC2a Preserve and protect natural areas.

PREPARED BY

Bruce McNabb, Director of Public Works Date: October 30, 2012