

APPROVED
Minnetonka Beach Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
November 25, 2024 – 7 pm

1. Call to Order

Chair Breazeale called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Breazeale, Finnegan, Gamble, Steinfeld, Whitely, Wortman; Council Liaison Halverson

Absent: Commissioner Swanson

Staff in attendance: City Clerk Jane Burgess

3. Approve Agenda

Whitely motion, Steinfeld second to approve the November 25, 2024 meeting agenda; all ayes, motion passed.

4. Approve Minutes - Regular Meeting of October 28, 2024

Whitely motion, Steinfeld second to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2024. All ayes, motion passed.

5. Zoning Code Review

5.1. Tree Preservation Ordinance Work Group – Survey

Breazeale reviewed the next steps of the project: 1. Determine if they have a valid survey based on numbers of responses, 2. Identify any areas of concern or interest that they recommend Planning look at from the survey work and previous work, and 3. Recommend the process on conducting the assessment and making recommendations on language changes to the ordinance.

Gamble stated they received 119 responses from 91 unique households (40% of approximately 230 households) which is a good response rate. The responses to individual survey questions were reviewed.

Gamble stated generally, most respondents agreed with some type of regulation of heritage and significant trees. Compared with the building code questions, there were similar responses that there should be some regulation of those codes also. There were 18-20% that did not want much regulation.

He reviewed themes on comments – streamline the process, sensitivity around needing permission to regulate diseased, dying, hazardous trees. Cottonwoods, arborvitaes, hedge trees, ornamental trees (crabapple) should not be included as protected, and there was no appetite to regulate more than is currently regulated. Restrictions to things that seem like common sense (diseased, dying, aging treated tree that is not responding to treatment).

Gamble stated 20%, 1 out of 5, did not think there should be any regulation. Some of those questions were people agreeing with the things that the city does not currently regulate. Most people agree with regulation. There are communities that have higher regulations, and 80 % of Lake Minnetonka area cities have tree ordinances.

There was discussion about the 27% disagreeing with regulation of heritage trees, and that the comments are interesting because 27% disagree with regulation but 37% think the current regulation is too restrictive, so some don't think regulation is a bad idea, but may be too restrictive. Whitely stated if you look at the "too restrictive" and "about right" the answers fall into groupings. Approx. 80-90% agree with things not currently regulated, and 70% think cottonwood restrictions are too restrictive. Wortman stated that the cottonwoods are never considered heritage right now but they kept them in the ordinance so people could count them toward their minimum density. Breazeale stated they may want to parse out the answers for those who think there should be regulations but think the current regulations are too restrictive. This will provide more information than those who simply want less regulation because those people are in a minority in the community. They could also look at those who disagree with regulations and their reason for more information. Gamble will filter results, sort comments agree/disagree with

about right/too restrictive, and work with Planning Commission to create a summary for City Council. Wortman stated those about right may have been less likely to make comments. Sort database for agree/disagree/about right and restrictiveness with the comments included. They discussed how to do a matrix or cross reference for various questions. There was discussion about arborvitae and determining if regulations are too restrictive.

Commissioners discussed the best ways to move forward in evaluating the answers and drawing conclusions. There may be a couple of parts that stand out to be researched further. They will characterize items to Council to consider such as size for significant, arborvitae, coniferous trees, and process for hazardous trees. The sources of data are emails on the current ordinance, the survey responses, staff comments and experience, and Halverson's research on other cities ordinances.

Finnegan asked if they wanted information from the original work group as to why they had specific regulations. They may want to ask questions later but first they would like to categorize all of the data. Wortman explained the process that Enlow, Rezabek, Mathews and she went through to create the Tree Protection Ordinance. She added that the ordinance is very black and white which made it complex but helpful when exceptions may be considered. At the next Planning Commission meeting, commissioners will circle back on the four sources created from the survey results and the work group will organize the survey data for the next meeting. Gamble and Breazeale will work with filtering the data, and add the email input, city staff input, and other city ordinances. Breazeale/Gamble will create a list of issues to consider for further research based on the data from the four sources. There is additional work to do before reporting to Council.

Interdependencies are issues to consider. All matrixes will be 3 x 3 with top two/middle/bottom two by too lenient/about right/too restrictive, except for #19 arborvitae question nothing to cross tab it with. Comments will be included but sorted into buckets. Gamble can summarize comments that are very long. Gamble/Breazeale will work on the survey matrix. Gamble already summarized prior email comments which can be looped into the survey work. Bridget will review other city ordinances and note anything that stands out. Whitely will look at the staff report. Each will create a list of items to consider. Whitely stated there was rich data, great qualitative comments, and great participation.

The next Planning Commission meeting on 12/16 was moved to 12/17 at 7:00 pm.

6. Reports

- 6.1. Chair Report – no report
- 6.2. Commissioner Reports – no reports
- 6.3. Council Liaison – Halverson reported on the City Council meeting. She reported the Water Treatment Plant is coming along and within budget. Parks will help with a reforestation plan at the new water treatment plant, and they are trying to get grant funding for that. She added that the Dock Committee is working on some possible changes at the Swim Beach Docks.
- 6.4. Building Permit Report – received and filed

7. Adjournment

Steinfeld motion, Whitely second to adjourn; all ayes, motion passed.

Chair Breazeale adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE – none

Minutes respectfully submitted by City Administrator Heidi Honey

Heidi Honey, City Administrator