



**Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411
May 18, 2006 – 9:30 - 11:30 am.**

Attendees:

Brown, Kirk	Tree Trust	Johnson, Gary	U of MN
Cordes, Jeff	City of Eden Prairie	Kortum, Mike	City of Eden Prairie
Eiber, Tom	MN DNR Forestry	Markeson, Tina	MnDOT
Hambleton, Glen	TCA	Nicholson, Stephen	Kunde Company Inc.
Hacker, Jan	Resource Analytics	Simons, Ken	Heritage Shade Tree Cons.
Hermann, James	Minneapolis Parks & Rec. Bd.	Sosniecki, Ben	City of Eden Prairie
Holman, Ken	MN DNR Metro Forestry	Widin, Katharine	Plant Health Assoc. Inc.

BUSINESS SECTION:

Call to Order, Introductions, Nomination of New Members & Review and Approval of Previous Minutes.

Simons called the meeting to order at 9:45 am. A quorum was not present so no official actions could be taken.

Cordes introduced Ben Sosniecki and Mike Kortum from the City of Eden Prairie and stated that they were submitting applications for membership in MnSTAC. A vote on their membership applications was tabled until the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

Committee and Partner Reports

Johnson thanked everyone who helped with Arbor Day planting at the State Fairgrounds. About 60 people attended. He pointed out that the U of M did not develop the disease resistant elms that were planted. They were developed by George Ware and were selected for ease of propagation, ease of care, and form. Johnson also reported that there will be three tours this spring & summer at the TRE nursery. He thanked the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board for their financial support for a lot of the work done at the nursery.

Johnson reminded those assembled of the upcoming METRIA Conference June 26-28 at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. He encouraged everyone to attend who was interested in meeting some of the most prominent urban forest entomologists, pathologists, and urban tree specialists in the country.

Johnson also announced a major change in the way in which the Mn Tree Inspector Tree Certification Workshops will be done. They will no longer be conducted at the Shade Tree Short Course. Instead,

this year's schedule in Sept. 18 in Waseca, Sept. 20 in Staples, Sept. 22 in Morris, and January during semester break on the St. Paul campus. The reason for the change was that the facilities at Bethel college were not ideal and that many individuals would like to attend both the workshop and the short course which is impossible if they are held at the same time.

Holman told members that the oak wilt suppression grant applications were out and were due June 5. The updated status of National Urban and Community Forestry funding through the Forest Service was that the amount now stood at \$29.5 million, up from what the president proposed.

State funding on a dedicated portion of the sales tax (which includes urban forestry elements) will be voted on in November. Details are still being worked out as to how the money will be spent. Monies to address diseases has been completely dropped from the bonding bill. Despite this setback, a good foundation has been laid for next year. Reasons stated for dropping it appeared to be the perception that this was strictly an urban problem and that sanitation and reforestation aren't typically bondable.

Brown mentioned that the Minneapolis Arbor Day planting is being held tomorrow at Fairview where 60 trees will be planted, sponsored by Home Depot. Minneapolis is also giving away 1,000 trees in celebration of Arbor Day. He praised the tree inspectors and master gardeners that have been working with Tree Trust in the miserable weather leading up to Arbor Day. Brown also announced the hiring of Paul Wierzbicki. He worked for an RC&D conservation district with over 400 communities before joining Tree Trust. Tree Trust is excited to have him on board.

Markeson reported that the MnDOT "Roadsides for Wildlife" program was in its second year. This program involves planting native species to enhance habitat diversity and reduce roadside maintenance.

Simons reported that focus issues have been identified as a result of the strategic planning effort. These include: networking; political action; and the Urban Forest Council. Networking would involve forums such as this. Political action would mirror that which MnSTAC members have undertaken in recent years. The Urban Forest Council would serve as the MnSTAC Board of Directors and would be expanded to 20 members to better accomplish their responsibilities to the state forester.

Forum Presentation

"National Great River Park"

Simons introduced Patrick Seeb, Executive Director of the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation. This non-profit corporation is spearheading the "National Great River Park" (NGRP) initiative. The St. Paul Riverfront Corporation was founded 20 years ago. Its genesis grew out of a vision of the renowned urban planner Ben Thompson who was engaged to create a vision for St. Paul riverfront development. He developed a single image for that development. This led to a decade of development in the downtown stretch of the river which culminated in 2004 with the Great Millennium. The NGRP is the next stage of work.

The NGRP is based on the understanding that St. Paul's Mississippi River valley is a regional asset of national significance. St. Paul has more linear riverfront than any other city on the Mississippi River. St. Paul has 4,000 acres of public land along the river and 17 miles of river frontage. In fact, the riverfront is 100 percent publicly owned. Improving access is a big need. This stretch of the river is rich in cultural resources. The central tenants of the initiative are: more natural; more urban; and more connected.

More natural involves planting more trees, establishing trails through parks and natural areas, green building technology, interpretive signage at points of cultural and historic significance, and enhancing the natural environment that is environmentally sustainable.

More urban involves high quality development on new and in-fill parcels while connecting that development with more choice of movement and a mix of retail, commercial and residential developments.

More connected involves improving physical access to the river with new overlooks, trails, parks, tree plantings and educational/interpretive programs about the river. This consecutiveness is physical, visual, and intellectual.

After Mr. Seeb's presentation, the group engaged in an extensive round of questions and answers. In response to a question about how the organization dealt with so many different interests, Seeb advised that the key was to seek commonality first. He also stated it was difficult to impose design standards on developers. Commitment and attention from the mayor is key to the success of doing so. Seeb expressed his gratitude for all those who worked on the Great River Greening. He considered it a great success.

No June meeting will be held. Instead, MnSTAC members are encouraged to participate in all or part of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council meeting to be held June 13-15 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Minneapolis. A highlight of the conference is a "Bus Tour" scheduled for Tuesday, June 13. The next meeting after that will be on July 20, 2006 at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The agenda will be sent when available. The meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan J. Hacker