



## Board of Directors Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee

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### Meeting Agenda

<p><b>Date:</b> Thursday, July 20, 2023 <b>Time:</b> 8:00 – 10:30 am <b>Location:</b> Tree Trust, 1419 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul or remote <b>Dial In:</b> <b>Before meeting:</b> Review agenda and associated reports. For questions, contact Valerie McClannahan <a href="mailto:valerie.mcclannahan@state.mn.us">valerie.mcclannahan@state.mn.us</a> <b>Contact:</b> Karen Zumach, President; 952-767-3886, <a href="mailto:karenz@treetrust.org">karenz@treetrust.org</a></p>	<p><b>Meeting Purpose:</b> Governance of MnSTAC including advising the president, organizing sub-committees, and approving reports, studies and position papers.</p> <p><b>Our mission:</b> <i>To be the leading advocate for Minnesota's community forests and to empower and educate Minnesota's citizens to maximize the coverage, health, quality, function, and future of our community forests.</i></p>
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1. Call to Order & Welcome and Roll Call: President Karen Zumach (5 minutes): The meeting was called to order at 8:04am. Introductions of all attendees: Karen Zumach, Sonja Tosteson, Ryan Murphy, Erin Andrews, Molly Coddling, Gordon Hanson (sp), Dustin Ellis, Emma Schultz, Jeff Haberman, Valerie McClannahan, Dave Hanson (standing in for Tina Markeson), Josh Obermeyer, Anne Oldakowski, Emily Ball, Mike Bahe, Louise Levy, Steve Nicholson, Craig Johnson, Shannon Gatz, Shane Bugeja, Steve Roos, Emery David (standing in for Kevin at MPCA). Mike McNamara.
2. Adopt Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions) (5 minutes): No requested changes.
3. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approve minutes April meeting (5 minutes): Craig moved to adopt. No requests or corrections. Dustin seconded. The motion carried.
4. On-Going/New Business (90 minutes)
  - a. DNR Update
    - i. Grants in process/upcoming: Request to learn more about current and upcoming funding. Valerie spoke about upcoming bonding funds, as well as policy changes. Emma spoke about ReLeaf funds, and increased activities eligible for reimbursement. Explanation of changes to grant programs. Louise mentioned how important ash tree preservation can be at the municipal level. Shane asked about counties helping private homeowners. Dustin asked if the applicant chooses their income verification? He explained what Hennepin County has thought through. Ex. wage statements and proof of ownership. Discussion on how to reach homeowners. Jeff asked how this relates to EJ 40 maps- do you have to vet further? Valerie mentioned further vetting. Dustin stated that EJ40 is not dynamic enough for thorough assistance. Craig asked about evaluation- could a community say “here is our plan for how we prioritize areas, may not exclusively limit the program to that?”

Emma asked if this means if some higher income residents are assisted, is that okay? As it's written now, it needs to go to low-income residents. Craig described a list of heating assistance addresses that they used during the pandemic, it was useful for water utilities. Karen asked if the ultimate goal is to provide access and incentive to tree care on private property to improve the overall community forest, described the reasons that middle-income homeowners might be equally struggling. Dustin asked about removals, and if they would be limited to the 10-mile radius: no, removals eligible across the state. Erin asked about manufactured homes when private companies own the land- DNR cannot fund for-profit companies, although work can occur there if a project is managed by a local unit of government or a non-profit. Shane asked how reimbursements for homeowners look. Emily mentioned the municipality or non-profit should manage the program to most equitably assist. Jeff asked if it could be use retroactively- no, this was requested but did not move forward. There are discussions about allowing retroactive reimbursements back to 2020, but this hasn't moved to the legislature yet. Steve N. asked if public housing agencies could go after this funding? If the land is owned by a local unit of government, that won't be an issue, as long as the local unit of government applies. Discussion of school districts as local units of government not being eligible to apply. We are discussing communications around the funding, and how to promote both internally and publically. We want the legislature to know how appreciative we are of these funds- this is one way to start looking at sustainability. If anyone has thoughts or ideas on how to maintain and make this funding sustainable, please reach out. DNR is in the process of increasing UCF staff, though this is still waiting on approval. DNR hired for the LCCMR position, Rachel Morice will begin Tuesday, July 25.

- ii. IRA request update: We have no idea when this funding will arrive. In theory, we have received IJA funding for wood utilization workshops, and \$50,000 for environmental justice work. Will also be able to fund the "new finds" in Cloquet, etc. No one has offered information on when IRA will arrive. Discussion of total requested amount nationwide, and that many states may not have pivoted to resubmit to the public notice of funding.
- b. USCA Carbon Credit Update: Emily, Gail, Kevin, Karen, Jeff, and a few others working on this program. The big idea is to create a carbon credit protocol, and then treat for an extended period of time. Feasibility test- does this make sense, is it possible. For the carbon markets to be legitimate, it needs to be an extended period of time. Working with City Forest Credits, they have a preservation protocol for wooded areas (40 years), and planting protocol (26 years). 26 years is the minimum this protocol would have to be in place to be sellable. Every 2-year treatment, staff time associated, does not make this feasible for anyone to embark on a 26-year commitment. The protocol is in place and created, so if carbon markets decide to look more favorably on urban forest credits, the \$35/ton for credit will go up—would need to be around \$300/ton to be feasible. Working with Matt Russell, he has put together a tool to help make the case for preserving ash trees over time. Benefits and numbers help to tell the story when discussing budgeting and a continued investment. Dustin would like to see the tool. Emily has a BCorp PR company connection that is currently creating a toolkit for communities, along with messaging. Target advertising is beginning to decision makers, private residents, and municipalities. Not shareable at the moment. The key is to catch those communities that have used staged removal, but to encourage them to keep trees in place as long as they are viable. Molly asked when it will be ready: hopefully within the next month. Dustin asked whose property it will be: it will be MnSTAC's and the US Climate Alliance. It will be free to users.
- c. Wood utilization summit proposal: Request coming off of conversation with MPCA, is there any appetite for creating carbon crediting for wood utilization. City Forest Credits is actively working on this, to create a way to incentivize wood. DNR has funding to talk about urban wood utilization, but is there any desire to get in front of decision makers about this. How can we get equivalent funding that District Energy gets but for higher-level wood utilization. Erin and Jeff,

Josh, are both doing things with wood. Can we spotlight the work they are doing? Jeff has been looking into biochar recently, and they are very interested in pursuing biochar as well as producing lumber. Originally, DNR had conversations with Hannibal- City of Minnetonka would host a workshop. Will also hold regional discussions around wood waste, are there waste to encourage partnerships with mills. Survey put out to investigate barriers at the local government level. DNR has pulled in Marketing and Utilization folks to evaluate their capacity.

- d. Tree Board member (vote required): We have a vote for a tree board member from Dayton, MN. He works in computers, and is a member of the Tree Board and Lions Club in Dayton. Tabling this, will be sent out for an email vote following today's meeting.
- e. Small group work/report out: How to make MNSTAC a less industry-specific organization. *(Please come prepared to provide insight, information and/or guidance on how MNSTAC can increase our reach to those not specifically involved in the industry for the improvement of our community forests.)*: Working in small groups to brainstorm and discuss to look at how we work in ways that are not industry specific. How can we start to change this conversation to be about important infrastructure- how do we get more of the public involved in MnSTAC? Dustin asked if we can table at the State Fair? Yes, there already is tabling with the Tree Care Advisors. This would help to get folks on the listserv. Any other tabling events if we have the time. If at-large members are willing to help; this would be an investment. Valerie asked if we can talk about what we want to offer the public, or what we need from the public. Sonja echoed this request. Molly added making direct connections about how this work influences people. Do we want the public to know more about trees? Do we just want to loop in tree-excited or tree-curious people? Thinking about MnSTAC's mission, creating advocates so that we are making a sustainability leap. We do have some funding to operate with now. We need to think about how we can elevate trees to create people who act. List of activities to help MnSTAC achieve their mission?
  - i. Fairs, other events
  - ii. Who is invited and who attends statewide DNR grant funding informational sessions- what is accessible, who is interested.
  - iii. Does the U promote MnSTAC at Tree Inspector? It's mentioned, but there is no specific slide—it could be added. Could this be added as a box when they're signing up to opt-in to newsletters? Sonja lets Tree Care Advisors know about MnSTAC, could add further plugs.
  - iv. Dustin asked if Hennepin County landing page could add a check box on to funnel to MnSTAC.
  - v. Offering educational opportunity for new members, or members of park boards, sustainability commission members. Tree-based knowledge they may not have to help them do their jobs better.
  - vi. Is there any way to access information through Tree City USA tree boards? To understand the statewide distribution of tree enthusiasts.
  - vii. What about our name? Could we DBA Minnesota Urban Forest Council?
  - viii. Create a tagline? MnSTAC: Your state's Urban Forestry Council?
  - ix. For community outreach, somewhat invisible presence on social media. Connection to YouTube at the end of the website—creating small-scale videos under 2 minutes long to draw in the general public. On popular walking trails, plant a tree or two to draw people to MnSTAC, and what people do for community. There are plans with the PR campaign to create new MnSTAC social profiles. Now is the time to discuss tacking something on. The issue with social media is that it needs someone dedicated to continue working with it. Does the outreach committee have the capacity to dedicate time to this? 10 people on the outreach committee. Spending a two-hour meeting to develop content that could be booked out for a year would be a wise investment of time. Craig mentioned difficulty with a board member in the past, would encourage a consistent voice with controls in place. Shane described difficulties with pages being removed, has happened with county pages. 1-2 admins recommended, not being able to be tagged, for Facebook. Gordon

explained that even comments when they violate Facebook policies, have had accounts deactivated. Hopefully with our subject matter, would be less likely to get comments like that. Administrator needed. Difficulty comes when policy not elucidated.

- x. MnSTAC website, and how we present to the public via the website. When Louise looks at the website and looks for what's coming up for meetings, the board meetings don't show. Can be a problem for a board member. For general public, will not see how MnSTAC works or functions. Louise is listed as a citizen-at-large; this is a misrepresentation, since she is representing the private sector. Gordon asked if Louise would like bios of each board member. Louise would like to see bios for board members. Discussion on adding increased representation beyond MSA on the board. Dustin mentioned that Consulting Forester/Arborist is one area, but those are two areas of expertise. Steve N. asked if Louise also does consulting for landowners and small communities, so she could fill his role on the board as well.
- xi. Mission refers to citizens, which does not reflect our population in Minnesota. Process for revisiting the language?

What does MnSTAC provide to members? Emily feels MnSTAC is unique because it offers a sense of community and camaraderie. It inspires collaboration. The funding that has been appropriated from the legislature is crucial and valuable. MnSTAC is a great networking opportunity, and helps inform our work to reach the audiences we need. Dustin echoed advocacy at the legislature for citizenry-at-large, and added forums to bring content and education to members. Thinking about MNLA, relationship and information sharing (UMN, DNR) and ability to work in unison is very helpful. Provides value as an outlet for information; MnSTAC has been a great tool for disseminating information, providing outreach statewide. Legislative advocacy, and a structure via the board for different sectors of our profession (tree care/work/urban forestry) to share/collaborate on ideas, efforts, initiatives.

What can MnSTAC be in the future? Extending awareness for environmental justice communities. Build power for folks who have not had a voice. Would require significant conversation about how to engage. Thinking about the education opportunities and who they are available to. DNR gets so many requests for outreach- who at MnSTAC is interested in engaging with EJ communities, and how can we facilitate those connections. Gordon would like the public to learn how to plant trees from MnSTAC, learn about the right tree species from MnSTAC. Broadening social media presence. DNR and UMN have lots of good resources, although they are difficult to find—elevate these resources. If there are topics that UMN doesn't have resources, let them know. Could collect resources more than recreating them. Shannon agrees with everything that has been said, would like to encourage social media tools to do public outreach. People want quick and fast information. They want screenshots, posters, etc.

## 5. Old Business (15 minutes)

- a. Board member comments/updates (*Please come prepared to provide insight, information and/or guidance on how MNSTAC can work with your representative organization to advance our mutual missions*):
  - i. Erin(MSA)- MSA is talking about doing a winter conference, possibly a social event not connected to another conference, with a speaker. The fall conference this year is in Duluth, mid-October. October 12-13. Plan ahead.
  - ii. Dustin will be resigning from the board. He has a replacement in mind. This is his last meeting. Shane will be his replacement. Karen will need to double check the bylaws of if members can be swapped.
  - iii. Mike (MNLA)- trade show will be in St. Paul this year, will be at the River Centre. In fall of 2024, will be reinvigorating a conference at the State Fairgrounds. Hands-on, demonstrations, etc. Starting 2024 will have two conferences. MNLA has Green Industry Leadership Institute; have been sending folks to this for close to a decade. Organizations of any size who have someone on a path to move up in the org.; it's a neat modular training once a month for 11 months. Held at MNLA facility in Roseville. Guest

speakers, and different topics on leadership. Not technical in nature, more about fiscal responsibility, etc.

- iv. Ryan (UMN)- annual field day, in the past has been advertised as sponsored by MSA and MnSTAC. Would they like to continue on like this? Will be August 17; sign-up will go out Monday. Is MSA still sponsoring? They haven't said they're not sponsoring. Louise mentioned it hasn't been on their radar. Danielle hasn't mentioned it. Perhaps it has been a part of EC communications, but Louise will connect with Danielle to ask. If there's any need for additional assistance, MnSTAC can quickly send out a vote to make sure there is assistance. Louise will cc Erin on communications.
- v. Gordon asked about pursuing 501c(3) status. EC has not met since last board meeting. With all of funding, it feels like a good time to actively explore this, but it's been on pause.

Next meeting is November 16.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:22am.*

Water your trees.