

Whitehouse Tree Commission

Minutes from July 10th Meeting

Attendance: Elliot Tramer, Christine Manzey, Diane DeYonker, Laurie Mauro, Steve Connelly (Council Representative), James Forrest (Staff Representative), Guests: Haley Belisle and Stephanie Miller (Urban Foresters).

Call To Order: Elliot Tramer called meeting to order at 7:30 pm

Minutes from June 19, 2025, were approved. Diane DeYonker moved and Laurie Mauro seconded.

Introduction of Guests: Stephanie Miller, current Urban Forester for our region, explained that Ohio regions for Urban Forestry were being increased from 6 to 10 regions and that Whitehouse was in a new region (#8) which will be overseen by Haley Belisle starting around March of 2026. Haley has a degree in Environmental Science and has been involved in stormwater management before being hired for the Urban Forester's position. She has been a Tree Commissioner at Findlay and will be shadowing Stephanie until March. She encourages us to seek her help in all aspects of urban forestry.

Elliot Tramer reviewed the background of the Whitehouse Tree Commission which has earned Growth Awards for 15 out of our 16 years as a Commission. He expressed his appreciation for all the support our Village Council and Administration has given the Tree Commission.

Old Business

America In Bloom: James Forrest and Laurie Mauro recounted what the visit by the America In Bloom committee entailed. James took the committee members on a tour of Whitehouse neighborhoods and public spaces, the Ohio Compost facility, Oak Openings, and Blue Creek Metroparks. The committee members liked the diversity of trees in our community, the Callery Pear Removal and replacement plans, and other future plans. Laurie was impressed by the committee's willingness to be helpful to us. One suggestion by the committee is that Whitehouse might consider striving to be a Botanical destination. Eventually our community will receive a 60-80 page report about our community plantings and perhaps awards based on specific criteria. Karen Gerhardinger with the Mirror newspaper wrote an insightful article about the America In Bloom visit. Elliot Tramer mentioned how Karen, through her articles, has been an excellent advocate for the Tree Commission.

Planting Design Update: Our current Planting Design needs to be modified because one of the suggested trees is the Sassafras which is difficult to procure. Stephanie Miller suggested that we use White-Shield Osage Orange, instead. This tree is more tolerant of poor soils (typical in tree lawns) and has a male-only cultivar that lacks fruit balls and thorns. This type of tree can easily be inserted into our Planting Design because it is in a family of trees that is not typically planted, so it will not interfere with the Commission's mission to diversify our Urban Forest.

Updating the Tree Inventory: Two groups of Commissioners (Elliot Tramer/Christine Manzey and Diane DeYonker/Laurie Mauro) have been busy walking the neighborhoods and measuring all street trees. A discussion was held about filling out the current inventory sheets. The updated data sheets are being sent to the new hire who is entering data into a GIS program for the community. Diane and Laurie noted

that volcano mulching (sometimes using stone with plastic liners) is being used and an effort should be made to educate residents about proper mulching techniques.

Tree Inventory: James Forrest reported that his crew is currently involved in Young Tree Training and that there have been no removals so far this month.

FaceBook Ideas: Elliot Tramer suggested that information from the Tree Commission's newly created Tri-Fold Information Board could be parsed out in FB segments. On the topic of communication, Christine Manzey mentioned that the Tree Commission website on the Community website needs updating. Laurie Mauro suggested that doorhangers could be created for residents who need feedback about proper mulching techniques. James Forrest reported that a Whitehouse Tree Commission logo has been created and is awaiting approval.

Whitehouse Library: Laurie Mauro would like to present the idea of displaying the Tree Commission's new Tri-Fold Information Board at the Whitehouse Library at an upcoming Staff meeting which will be held on the first Tuesday of August. Elliot Tramer and Christine Manzey are willing to accompany Laurie and explain how the community could benefit from the information the Tree Commission would provide not only on the Tri-Fold but also with a series of handouts about proper tree care and insect pests.

Forms and Docs: no new forms to enter.

New Business

New Park Design: James Forrest showed a landscape architect's sketch of a possible re-design of the entry to our downtown park. The Village Council would like the Tree Commission's input as to types of trees to be used for both new plantings and replacements for aging Silver Maples. Stephanie Miller suggested that Haley Belisle could perform a Risk Assessment on the current Silver Maples to determine a timeline about replacements. Stephanie also suggested that new trees should not be greater than 3 inches in diameter because the smaller trees would have a better chance of survival and would need less initial maintenance. James Forrest mentioned the 100% success of tree plantings at Sandra Park using small diameter tree stock.

Tree City: Despite applications not being due until December, Elliot Tramer mentioned that our Tree Commission had to begin the process of applying for renewal of our Tree City status and optional Growth Awards. Stephanie Miller emphasized that our Commission should follow directions given by the Ohio Division of Forestry rather than those given by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Thanking Stephanie Miller: Elliot Tramer, as Chairman of the Whitehouse Tree Commission, expressed gratitude for the years of service that Stephanie has devoted to being our region's Urban Forester. She has enthusiastically supported our ideas, given us invaluable information, been an advocate for some of our suggestions, and even appeared before our Village Council to explain the value of new technology such as the use of Silva Cells.

Meeting Adjourned: Diane DeYonker moved for adjournment at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Manzey