**CITY OF LA GRANDE**

**COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE AND FORESTRY COMMISSION MINUTES**

**September 14, 2021 via Zoom Video Conference**

Members present: Lia Spiegel, Robert Henderson, Toni Smith

Members absent: Dave Cocke

Staff Present: Teresa Gustafson, Urban Forester

Stu Spence, Parks & Recreation Director

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. with three (3) of four (4) Commissioners present.

1. **AGENDA APPROVAL**
   1. Staff requested to add the Pruning Workshop to Old Business and Recruitment to New Business. The following motion was introduced by Henderson; Smith providing the second: Motion: I move that we approve the agenda as amended. MSC. Unanimous.
2. **MINUTES APPROVAL**
   1. The following motion was introduced by Henderson; Smith providing the second: Motion: I move that we approve the May minutes as presented. MSC. Unanimous.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
   1. None.
4. **OLD BUSINESS**
   1. **Pruning Workshop**
      1. The workshop was June 11th for 2 or 3 hours where the Commission learned how to prune and pruned street trees in the City’s Right of Way.
         1. At least 6 trees pruned around the Greenwood neighborhood
         2. Teresa said she appreciated everyone’s help
      2. Lia since pruned some trees around the Middle School and Teresa picked up the branches. Lia invited others to do the same.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
   1. **Fall Street Tree Planting**
      1. Teresa says there are quite a few trees to plant this fall.
      2. It’s scheduled for October 2, but we may bump out the planting if it is still hot and dry. Teresa said that the 2nd or 9th could work – she asked everyone to check their schedules.
      3. Stu said we are back to full Covid protocols planting in family groups and we wouldn’t be able to open this up to the community at large.
      4. Teresa is working on a firm delivery date with Schmidt.
   2. **Fall Beautification Awards**
      1. Teresa said she has received a couple of nominations – one commercial and one residential. She asked Commissioners to get the nominations to her by September 25th.
      2. Lia asked to clarify what information is needed for the nominations. She was worried about the contact information. Teresa clarified that contact info was intended for Facebook nominations. She hasn’t gotten many of those – people are emailing her or turning them in by hand.
         1. Teresa says contact information is not necessary.
      3. Robert asked about getting door hangers that Commissioners can use if they nominate a property. Teresa has one that says they have been nominated.
      4. Stu says the current system is not broken so he suggests to use Facebook to advertise then Teresa can follow up like she does now.
      5. Teresa will make sure the form is updated on the new website.
   3. **2nd Street Tree Planting Volunteers**
      1. Teresa said that there are about 30 oak and pine that need to be planted this fall.
         1. Pine trees are heavy and will be planted by staff
            1. Lia, Robert, and Toni may have flexible time and can help.
   4. **Recruitment**
      1. Stu said to reach out to your networks to see if you can find anyone who might be interested. There is one vacancy.
      2. Lia said that Dave might be moving soon as well.

**VII. STAFF REPORTS**

1. **Urban Forester**

Teresa sent out her staff report and the highlights include:

* + 1. A lot of time watering and pruning.
    2. Michael donated a lot of work on Island Ave with another 10 trees to go.
    3. Wrapped up storm response coordination. There is one more tree left to remove. Greenwood School still has to remove and/or prune their damaged trees. (Heritage Trees)
    4. First day of Oregon Community Trees conference started today. Offers CEUs at an affordable price. ODF offered scholarships. Very successful.

1. **Director**
   * 1. Stu reported to the Commission that a tree was hit on Cove Avenue several months ago and the City will be receiving an insurance settlement for $1800 that will go in to the tree grants and donations account that can be used to purchase future trees.

**VIII. INFORMATION**

1. Teresa posted on the Department’s Facebook page the signs of drought in trees and shared some thoughts about tree watering. The point is to keep watering all the way up until winter with soaker hose around the drip line.

**IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

* + 1. Lia asked about Schictel’s Nursery for a possible supplier (Milton Freewater). Teresa will follow up with them. Lia would like to explore that and get a tour.
    2. Lia asked about thousand cankers disease in Walnut Trees. Teresa confirmed that it is a bad one and has had a couple of calls about the disease. Looks like it could be the problem, but Teresa hasn’t sent any lab samples. Best to burn or chip the material, not pile it up. A problem all along the I-84 corridor.
    3. Lia asked about the seasonal employee this summer and why that didn’t happen. Stu answered that parks and pool struggled to hire enough personnel so UF had to share an employee with other departments.
    4. Toni asked about the easement discussion
       1. Teresa – met with City Planner Boquist and Kyle C with PW. No changes needed to the Land Development Code or any ordinance. They will change their internal specifications and rules for ROW improvements. PW is working on specifications on green space improvements.
       2. Also asked about contractor that removed a tree in the ROW at the old Observer building. Teresa called the contractor and told him that there is a fine and a permit is required. He said it was intent to replace the tree with a younger tree, but Teresa pointed out that it’s not the same. She hopes to remove the asphalt in the ROW and adding four or five street trees in lieu of paying the fine. Commissioners thought that was a great idea and Teresa will continue to follow up.
       3. Toni thanked Teresa for presenting at their summer program.
    5. Stu reminded the Commission to keep track on the volunteer time card any hours done outside of meetings or organized activities.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. Next regular meeting is scheduled for October 12th via Zoom video conference.