

Akron Documenters

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Tree Commission

Documenter name: Simone Walton

Agency: None

Date: Oct. 15, 2024

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Summary

- Members discussed the process of expanding from five to nine members. Mayor Shammass Malik is in agreement, and Akron City Council could vote as early as Oct. 21 on an ordinance to approve this.
- The commission hopes to partner with an organization that collects donated phones and, in turn, helps the city plant trees.
- Representatives from [Keep Akron Beautiful](#) talked about their tree-of-the-week program. Anyone can nominate a tree in their ward by submitting a photo of the tree.

Follow-Up Questions

- How effective will the retreat be?
- What updates will have to be made once the commission expands?
- What will be involved in the re-evaluation process of the commission?

Notes

Today's meeting was called to order at 1:44 p.m. by Chair Sarah Vradenburg, and the roll call reflected a quorum: Sara Biviano, Jeff Fusco and Vradenburg. Four guests were also present, which included [Keep Akron Beautiful](#) (KAB) Executive Director Jacqui Ricchiuti and KAB Community Outreach Manager Emma Segedy, Akron's newest Arborist Matt Knull, and Akron Parks Maintenance Foreman John Hilkert.

The minutes from last month's meeting were approved.

Unfinished Business

Public Education: There were no updates for the brochure. Vradenburg will find out information for the upcoming meeting.

Update for expanding the Tree Commission: Fusco said that Mayor Shammass Malik is “very good” with expanding the commission from five to nine members. The proposal is to add a KAB representative and three other members. Fusco mentioned interested people include an engineer and two people from [Torchbearers](#). Fusco thinks legislation to amend the city charter will be brought to the City Council soon. Council has to approve this change. Members are appointed by the Malik and approved by council.

[Phones for Trees](#) update: The commission hopes to partner with a “grassroots nationwide organization dedicated to helping the environment.” The way it works: The city obtains a bin from Phones for Trees. Anyone can donate their old phones to the bin, and the company will refurbish or recycle the phones for money. Any money they make is used to plant trees. The Tree Commission is still vetting this company. Fusco has reached out but has not received a response yet.

Accepted electronics include cell phones, tablets, laptops, Fitbits, smart watches, AirPods, Bose Beat (or similar) headphones, and other small electronic devices.

New Business

Keep Akron Beautiful representatives explained the Tree of the Week program. Anyone can nominate a tree in their ward by submitting a photo of the tree on either public or private land. Then Segedy will research it and list a couple of fun facts. She makes certain that every ward is represented, and the feedback from the program has been very good.

Keep Akron Beautiful has a partnership with Barberton Tree, which posts the tree photo as well.

Ricchiuti is working with Akron Director of Communications Stephanie Marsh and Malik to share and make a collaborative social media post. The goal is to include the logo for KAB the City of Akron and the Tree Commission.

Director Of Sustainability And Resiliency Casey Shevlin will give an update on [Opportunity Project for Cities](#) at the next meeting. KAB is working with the Tree Commission on this as well.

For the Good of the Order

Fusco thinks a retreat should be set up with new members. He said the Tree Commission should look at its ordinances and the way business is done; everything should be revisited and updated as it pertains to conduct. He said the retreat should be a two-hour, in-person meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.