



**CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069**

Thursday, April 04, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 4th day of April, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Peacock calls meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock (Chair)

ABSENT:

Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Ms. Beth Muckala, Assistant City Attorney III
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Planner
Ms. Jane Hudson, Director of Planning & Community Development
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreations
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Director of Public Works
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Ms. Lora Hoggatt, Planning Services Manager
Ms. Kelly Abell, Planner I
Mr. Colin Zink, City Forester
Mr. Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Tech. III

1. **DISCUSSION REGARDING LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.**

Chairman Peacock said this is just going to be an open discussion on this topic today. This was brought up from several citizens about the historic tree canopy in the college campus area, but it is lamenting and it is not city wide. The goal is to create something that is not cumbersome or create a burden on the developers. He said he would like to add value to these projects and if constructed in the right way, Hopefully everyone would okay with the changes.

Councilmember Schueler said the City has requirements for residential developments to have trees, but she often hears the developers put in the required trees and then the tree dies and they are not replaced.

Chairman Peacock suggested changing the size of the tree required from a one inch to three inch, adding a little more survival rate and possibly some native trees that are more hearty for the area.

Councilmember Schueler said we are doing this with City landscaping and should be more mindful of what recommendations get made in relationship to developers. She said a lot of Council conversation has not been geared in creating this, it has been more about a Walkable Urban Environment.

Chairman Peacock said he does not necessarily want a blanket statement and these are things Council needs to reconcile.

Councilmember Grant said trees should be native to this area that would have better survival and incentivize using them.

Councilmember Holman said the City needs some kind of requirement and be proactive for the upkeep of the trees and landscaping. Preserve trees that are already in place and only take down what is necessary to build. Wants to look at other city policies specifically, the City of Moore's on trees for parking lots and landscaping requirements.

Chairman Peacock said Council recently saw where a developer took advantage of already existing trees. It's difficult to put these trees in after the fact so if we are going to do it lets do it on the front end of these projects. Would like to have a fund that could create incentives to plant trees on already existing lots maybe a Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said it would be a great TIF idea and knows Mr. Briggs and Mr. Olsen have been pretty successful on an annual bases handing out hundreds of trees so if you think about maybe reevaluate and get trees in the parking lots.

Mr. Colin Zink, City Forester, said the trees we hand out right now are purchased with money from city partners and organizations that purchase these trees.

Item 1, continued

Councilmember Schueler said Council needs to consider the root systems of the trees that grow out. They are breaking sewer lines and waterlines. Utilities in the right of ways need to be considered and be thoughtful of what that means for Public Works.

Mr. Pyle said there is all kinds of information out there and staff has the ability to assemble it. Packages could go out to Home Owners Association's (HOA) or Neighborhood Alliance segments and Staff could promote that educational material through the weekly newsletter and make it available on our website.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Interim Director of Public Works, said trees between curbs and sidewalks are going to be a difficult situation. Utilities lines are being moved to the front of properties. Oklahoma Natural Gas (O.N.G) and Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (O.E.C.) are also starting to relocate to the front. He said there will be a lot of areas where developers are not going to be able to functionally put trees in the front, space is already cramped. The other issue is sidewalk repairs, 60% of damage staff sees is due to tree roots and in confined areas it is also breaking up curbs. Trees while they are beautiful can be a lot additional problems. He felt a blanket policy is not going work in all areas.

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said when you put a tree in the right a way and it becomes hazardous it becomes the City's responsibility to making it non-hazardous or fully removing the tree. To fully remove a tree, we have to hire an arborist and if it is close to a power line that's even more of an expense.

In addition, when trees are being retro-fitted into parking lots, you need to be aware you have to do soil amendments and add irrigation and plant the correct tree to make sure it has a proper chance to survive. It needs to have at least 15ft cut around each tree and somehow figure out irrigation to water the tree. Summer heat and long periods between rains is a lot of stress on a tree.

Councilmember Holman said we do have some cost that comes with maintaining the trees but they add so much value. We need to be more mindful of road widenings and would like to add more trees in the gaps in the University North Park (UNP) area off 24th Avenue N.W.

Mr. Pyle said to touch on what Councilmember Holman was saying there are gaps throughout the city. Staff could find the big gaps and prioritize those and Council can have input on where the focus should be.

Councilmember Schueler said maybe get some help for residents with expense with tree maintenance. Maybe from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Mr. Pyle said, I will get with Lisa and maybe see if we can incorporate this kind of project into CDBG.

Councilmember Grant asked about the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Grant that Oklahoma City applied for and would like for us to plan on applying for that grant next year.

Item 1, continued

Chairman Peacock said taking a fresh look at our landscaping ordinance see what opportunities exist to enhance and retrofit parts of it and make sure that our forester has the tools he needs. If structured properly hopefully everyone would get on board with this concept and see the value in it.

ADJURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 P.M.