

Akron Documenters

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Tree Commission

Documenter name: Meagan Rodgers

Agency: None

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Summary

- The Tree Commission continues to work to develop a periodic tree recognition program intended to highlight and celebrate trees around Akron — either Tree of the Month or Tree of the Season. They are developing signage, brochures and communications strategies.
- The commission intends to expand from its current five members to either seven or nine individuals. This is an opportunity to allow resident involvement and nurture relationships with organizations in the city with overlapping interests (including [Keep Akron Beautiful](#) and [Summit Metro Parks](#).)
- Commission members brought up different routes through which new members might be found: information could be provided on the Tree Commission's website for anyone interested in joining, and commission members could continue to have conversations with potential candidates already in their professional networks.

Follow-Up Questions

- Are there segments of the community (e.g. geographic, demographic) that aren't adequately represented on the commission? What steps can the commission take to encourage qualified and interested people who aren't already connected to commission members to consider joining?
- Can the city put into place basic Zoom protocols for online-only city meetings so all members are visible (i.e. gallery view)? This would make it easier for new attendees to follow the proceedings.

Notes

[Livestream](#) start time: 1:31 p.m. The primary speaker was Jeff Fusco, council member at-large, who connected to Zoom from a cell phone. The meeting was formatted to only show one person at a time, but there were three people watching.

Fusco (vice chair), Patricia Wyatt and Sara Biviano (secretary) were present, while Eufancia Lash and Sarah Vradenburg (chair) were absent. Quorum achieved.

Fusco led the meeting in Vradenburg's absence.

Notes (following agenda outline)

1. Approved July 16 meeting minutes.
2. Public education strategy
 - a. Brochure- Vradenburg is working on that. She'll provide an update at the next meeting.
 - b. Tree recognition program
 - i. Informing the public about the program: Fusco said he had a conversation with [Director of Communications](#) Stephanie Marsh. When the commission has a plan in place, it will be forwarded to Marsh for review and feedback.
 - ii. Signage (for honorees)
 1. Fusco has a few designs ready and will forward them to commission members for review.
 2. Considering corrugated plastic or metal (possibly manufactured by the city's [Traffic Engineering office](#)).
 - iii. Procedures (nominations, criteria) - still being developed
 1. Fusco emailed a comparable city in the south with a tree recognition program to ask them about their processes. He hasn't heard back yet.
 2. Frequency of award
 - a. Fusco suggested starting with seasons instead of months to ease into the process.
 - b. The plan is to recognize four per month (based on each quarter of the city) instead of all 10 wards every month.
 3. Starting the program- They're considering partnering with

[Summit Metro Parks](#) and using the [Signal Tree](#) as the first honoree.

- iv. Outreach to Council- Biviano reached out to City Council. Wards 4, 6 and 7 responded with invitations to speak at their monthly ward meetings when ready.
- c. Expanding the commission
 - i. The commission can expand to seven or nine members. Fusco and Vradenburg have met with a few interested candidates. He believes it could be prudent to foster relationships with [Keep Akron Beautiful](#) and [Summit Metro Parks](#) as part of this expansion.
 - ii. Wyatt asked if there was any information on the Tree Commission's website for individuals who might be interested in joining the commission. Fusco responded that there isn't. He noted that he had spoken with [Director of Sustainability and Resiliency](#) Casey Shevlin about the future possibility of creating a "Friends of" organization similar to those at the library branches and Metro Parks. The group could serve as a feeder for commission members and as a support system.
- d. New business
 - i. Fusco referred to a donation box at Mustard Seed Market in Highland Square where individuals can donate old electronics and the proceeds go to environmental programs. He wants to look into something similar for the commission at some point in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

[Read the X/Twitter thread of this meeting.](#)

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.