

Gates Mills Tree Canopy Subcommittee
Minutes - June 10, 2024

Subcommittee members present: David Atton, Sandra Turner, Lucy Chamberlain (by Zoom), Nat Smith, Holly Mathews, Mitch Bass (arrived 1:15 p.m.). Absent: Erick Carlson

Mayor Steve Siemborski was present. Joan Lamprecht recorded minutes.

Sandra Turner began the meeting at 1:02 p.m. and introduced Matt Leiden, State Division of Forestry, ODNR. Matt works with the local Tree Commissions and his office is located at Punderson State Park.

Timely minutes were received from the June 7th meeting and were distributed last evening. Approval of those minutes will be deferred until the next meeting on July 9.

Today's agenda as printed will focus on Matt Leiden presenting information.

Future meetings will be chaired by rotating committee members who will set the agendas.

Matt Leiden presented the following information:

- Both of the Gates Mills tree ordinances were reviewed by ODNR.
 - Mayor Siemborski asked about Tree City status
 1. Requires Tree Commission (Committee) or department with authority to advise the Village government regarding tree management. Mayor Siemborski said that we have 7 members of the Tree Canopy Subcommittee who were approved by Council.
 2. Requires public tree care ordinance(s). GM ordinances may need to be edited for public emphasis of tree protection.
 3. Requires spending \$2 per capita annually (\$4,000 in GM)
 4. Requires Arbor Day observance and proclamation
 - Must hold an Arbor Day event, which can be held any day of the year, open to the public with a press release and photo.
 - *Additionally, Ohio requires an annual work plan (sample attached from Matt Leiden)

Ordinance language can be taken directly from sample Public Tree Ordinance or website example from Grove City.

Application for Tree City designation opens in October and submission is required by first week of December.

Mitch Bass mentioned the potential for conservation easements to be in parallel or conflict with existing easements. Need to check.

David Atton noted that it is more important to make ordinances for our purposes than for Tree City designation. He also reminded us of a building ordinance that involves trees. Are ordinances enforced?

Sandra Turner noted that Tree City would overlap our goals.

Mayor Siemborski asked if Tree city designation would affect grant capability and Matt Leiden indicated designation would facilitate our grant applications.

Mayor Siemborski indicates a to-do list is to read ordinances and have comments to include in minutes. Lucy Chamberlain asked about the process of writing ordinances, and David indicated that the document from the Tree Academy provides guidance. Mayor Siemborski suggests that everyone read the materials made available on ordinances and be ready to discuss at the next meeting. Sandra Turner offered to collect and document comments on TCA book references and current village ordinances from all committee members prior to July 9th committee meeting.

Matt Leiden suggests using the chart on the “Freshman Homework” document which was distributed at today’s meeting as a guide to reviewing ordinances. Also, Matt wants to walk/drive around to get additional information to augment our ordinances. John Kehn should be invited as well.

Mayor Siemborski suggests using the GM Arboretum as first project to use as example for villagers. David Atton comments that most trees within the GMLC and on public land are not visible from the road. Trees on private property are less visible.

The Tree Commission Academy was updated for 2025 after 10 years. Cost is \$50 per person per 2-day class. \$200 total for freshman, sophomore, junior, senior classes per attendee. All classes are completed in one year, typically held mid-week January-2 days, March-2 days, Aug/Sept-2 days, and October (graduation)- 1 day. Participants are typically mayors, tree commission members, city workers, tree companies or contractors. Matt will let this subcommittee know when enrollment is open, typically August, and will indicate how many participants will be admitted from GM. Classes are 25-35 persons. We should identify 4-5 persons who are interested in attending. Go to ohioarborist.org to register. Holly Mathews and David Atton volunteered. Ted Zalewski of the Service Dept. could benefit as well.

Mayor Siemborski asked about education for villagers, perhaps reference materials. Matt Leiden suggested ODNR’s web page...TCA Freshman Homework document, treesaregood.org website.

Matt Leiden will send

- Sample ordinances
- Annual work plan example
- Tree Academy schedule

Mitch Bass asked if the state will do a tree canopy assessment for Gates Mills. Matt Leiden answered no. The county did one in 2018. The village must hire a private assessor. At the last meeting David

Atton, Lucy Chamberlain and Erick Carlson offered to speak to the county or to a private contractor about updating the Village's tree canopy assessment.

David Atton asked if there is an ordinance example for a village like GM. Matt Leiden said there is not, but Rocky River is planting trees on private property with cost share between the county and city.

Hunting Valley received money from the county for tree planning. They have a good grant writer.

Mike Press in the audience mentioned the tax advantages of harvesting. Lucy Chamberlain mentioned villagers cannot cut trees or profit as done by portable sawmills that were visiting villagers some years ago. The Spirks have a harvesting program through John Kehn of ODNR. (CAUV).

Next steps: reading, share documents, pay attention to dates for TCA registration and for the Tree City designation.

Matt Leiden departed at 2:06 p.m. but can be reached with questions and concerns before the next committee meeting.

Holly Mathews asked what are the subcommittee's short term goals (1-2 months). Sandra Turner suggested reviewing ordinances and scheduling an Arbor Day event (national arbor day is April 26th). We can set our own Arbor Day in the Village. Lucy suggested involving the school. Nat Smith suggested an October date to plant at Sherman Road property and get the Environmental Center involved. There is a June 29th dedication of a tree to late postal clerk, Paula Nock, and there was discussion whether that could be an Arbor Day event. Nat suggested selecting an annual date. Holly Mathews suggests fall for planting and will set this up with the GM Elementary School. She will call Laurel. Lucy Chamberlain suggests the subcommittee should select 3 planting sites with 3 tree types.

Mayor Siemborski suggests 6 month goals. Subcommittee agreed on list:

- pursue Tree City status
- review ordinances and get one redlined version to village council for review and approval
- attend TCA (who/when)
- inform residents of progress
- drive through Village with John Kehn, Northern Service Forestry Coordinator, Division of Forestry, ODNR
- do inventory or investigate "inventory and tree canopy"

Mayor Siemborski indicates the Village engineer has a tree company that would do a tree canopy assessment on a small area of the Village. Lucy Chamberlain suggests the need to define 'canopy' and 'assessment' and align with the county. Planet GEO is an option and they use an AI program. Can they recalibrate their results to relate to county data? David Atton will have that information to

report at July committee meeting. Mayor Siemborski will report on possible work with private contractor.

Sandra Turner will invite John Kehn to July committee meeting. Nat Smith suggests getting drive around with John Kehn on the calendar.

Sandra Turner reviewed the Sunshine Laws aka Ohio Public Records Act.

All public meetings shall

- have public notice 24 business hours prior to meeting containing date, time, purpose, and minutes must be available.
- committee must have quorum (4 of 7 members) present, not on video for any voting
- conversations among a quorum outside of a meeting is not allowed. Actions resulting could be found by a court to be null and void.

Closing comments:

Mitch Bass is clearing invasive from his property on Chagrin River Rd.

David offers that the structure of this subcommittee is only to make recommendations to village council. A tree commission would work to a plan they have been given.

Sandra Turner asked for someone to host July 9th meeting, set the agenda and have reading material distributed to members prior to meeting. Contact the mayor if interested.

There is a Gates Mills Encore pop-up concert at Burton Court at 3 p.m. All are invited.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.