



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 08-01-2024

REQUESTER: James Briggs, Parks Development Manager

PRESENTER: AshLynn Wilkerson, Assistant City Attorney

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE PROPOSED TREE ORDINANCE.

BACKGROUND:

The 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan included funding a project to hire a company to provide several services to support the Forestry Division of the Parks and Recreation Department. Parks staff's initial plan was to find a company to review our existing Tree Ordinance, perform a street tree inventory of the urbanized parts of Norman, and work with our staff to produce an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) to help guide the work plan for our City Forester for the next decade and beyond.

In April 2023, we received proposals from four companies to provide these services. Staff evaluated the proposals and pricing and hired DAVEY Resource Group, Inc. (DAVEY) to work on the tasks. Once we started working on the final costs for the functions we were seeking to accomplish, it was decided that the budget available at that time would only be able to fully cover the costs associated with the Tree Ordinance Review task. We decided to proceed with that work, which began in July 2023, on the Ordinance Review process between DAVEY and City Staff from Parks and Recreation/Forestry, Planning, and the Legal Departments.

The ordinance has been used since its creation in the early 2010s to regularly help define roles and seek solutions to several tree-related situations in Norman and also to help guide decisions related to tree plantings and how they interact with the development and construction of roads, housing, utility lines and other things done daily in the city by both public and private contractors. The ordinance was written with the intent of regular review and modification. The Norman Tree Board has reviewed and approved the work (attached).

DISCUSSION:

Once Davey Resource Group was selected for the Ordinance Review work, the process was started in July 2023. The City of Norman Legal Department did an extensive review to ensure the proposed changes would agree with other policies, codes, and procedures followed by different departments in the city. Much of the work focused on things such as definition changes in the ordinance, clarification of what is regulated under the ordinance, updates to regulated & prohibited activities, establishing a licensing process for specific tree work, establishing a

permitting process before certain tree alteration activities; updates to abatement process for tree nuisances and tree protection with particular construction projects; added notification requirements for utility companies; and establishing "Tree Districts" in place of the former historical tree designation (see attached).

The contract with DAVEY has since been expanded to include the first phase of a Norman Tree Inventory. We are starting this work by looking at trees in public parks and other public properties (facilities in town owned by the city that contain trees). This work is independent of the Ordinance Review; however, the revised ordinance's language covers what trees the City regulates. As described above, all parts of the work being done by DAVEY will help us ultimately produce the UFMP.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Norman Board of Park Commissioners recommend the adoption of the proposed update to the City of Norman Tree Ordinance to the Norman City Council.