TONY BRAND	SHARON BUCKLE	VACANT	BILL MANKER	OLIVIA ROWE	BRIAN WINN
CHAIRPERSON		**ALTERNATE**			**VICE-CHAIR**

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

TOM COURTNEY	**CITY MANAGER**
GREGORY LANTING	**COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE**
DENNIS J. BOWYER	**PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR**
KEVIN SKELTON	**PARKS COORDINATOR**

TWIN FALLS CITY TREE COMMISSION MEETING

December 18, 2009 * * * * * 11:00am * * * * * City of Twin Falls Council Chambers

Members Present: **Tony Brand, Sharon Buckle and Brian Winn**

Members Absent: **Olivia Rowe and Bill Manker**

Non-Voting Member Present: **Dave Kiesig**

Council Absent: **Gregory Lanting**

Staff Present: **Dennis Bowyer and Kevin Skelton**

MINUTES

Chairperson Tony Brand called the meeting to order at 11:07am.

Item #1 Approve minutes of the November 20, 2009 meeting

Sharon Buckle made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20th, 2009 meeting. Brian Winn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item #2 Tree of the Month – Kevin Skelton

Kevin reported on the Douglas Fir. The Douglas Fir is the most widely used Christmas tree in the country. It was named after David Douglas, a Scottish botanist. The Douglas Fir usually grows 40-60 ft in height but can grow as high as 250 ft. The spread is 15-25 feet. Kevin had read that there was a tree cut down in 1897 in Washington that was reported to be 465 feet in height and 34 feet at the base. The tree was said to be 480 years old. The bark on a young tree is smooth and gray. The mature trees have thick and furrowed bark. The branches are spreading to drooping and the buds sharply pointed. The needles are dark green or blue green, 1 to 1 ½ inches long, soft to the touch and radiate out in all directions from the branch. They have a sweet fragrance when crushed.

The pine cones are 3-4 inches, oval shaped and hang downward. The Douglas Fir drops seeds in late summer. This tree grows best in full sun and is tolerant of clay and alkaline soil. It has a poor salt

tolerance. Root rot can be a serious problem on clay and other wet soils. This tree has several uses; mainly for landscape use and for Christmas trees.

Tony will report on the tree of the month in January.

Item #3 VIP Program - Commission

Dennis reported that he spoke with Angel Spell, the Urban Forester from Post Falls. She informed him that their VIP (Volunteers in Pruning) program training is offered on Saturdays for 4 hours and is available to anyone interested 16 years and older. The first part of the training is classroom style and then the participants go on-site for pruning instructions. The training reviews tree biology; the structure of a tree and learn about the proper tools to use. The on-site pruning is basic pruning: when to prune, what to prune and how much to prune.

Post Falls maintains all the trees in public spaces and public rights-of-way. They implemented this volunteer program because they needed more help. When they need to prune young trees in the right of way, they call all participants from their training asking them to help out. The day is usually a ½ day, during the week or on a Saturday. They have someone from staff supervising the volunteers and supply the majority of the tools for the volunteers to use. Dennis did forget to ask Angel how many participants they usually have at these trainings.

Tony suggested having homeowners that are elderly or unable to afford to have someone prune their trees submit an application for this program and have the volunteers prune their trees. Dennis said he likes that idea but the purpose of the program is to prune young trees so there won't be a need for a bucket truck. He suggested making the focus of the workshop we hold in March teaching homeowners to prune young trees. He also suggested contacting the recipients of the Tree Enhancement program and invite them to attend the workshop since the trees they received should be ready to be pruned.

Sharon asked if there is a maintenance schedule in place for the trees that get planted for Arbor Day. Kevin explained that they have a schedule and those trees get added to the rotation and Parks staff takes care of the trees in each of their areas.

Staff is concerned with volunteers working on trees in the parks due to them making a mistake and ruining the tree for good. They would be supervised but that would also depend on how many people there would be to supervise and answer questions. We wouldn't have enough staff if there were a lot of people there. Sharon asked who would oversee these volunteers, assuming it would be Kevin. She asked if we could delegate the responsibility to someone else. Dennis stated that he would not want to delegate to someone else. Kevin is the City's certified Arborist and would need to be the one in charge but he is supervisor to 7 employees, in charge of the maintenance of the pool and with his regular work, would not have enough time to dedicate strictly to this program.

Sharon doesn't feel comfortable launching a new program with no oversight plan. Staff is hesitant to have volunteers pruning trees in parks. Dennis will speak with Angel and ask her how many people usually attend the trainings and how many people usually show up to prune trees when called upon. Tony also asked him to mention our concerns to her.

Tony suggested promoting the workshop at the Home and Garden Show. We will advertise that anyone can participate in the workshop, not only city of Twin Falls residents.

Item #4 Tree City USA Recertification and Growth Award

Dennis went over the application for the recertification for the Tree City USA and growth award. The City has sent in the applications.

We will be receiving points for the Growth Award. There will be 2 points awarded for the attendance at the Master Gardner Symposium, 4 points for holding the Public Workshop, 3 points for our participation in the Arbor Day Parade and 3 points for the pocket park at the Grain Elevators.

Item #5 Other Items from the Commission

Dennis informed the Commission that Lacy Johnson resigned last month. Tony contacted Bill Manker and he has decided to resign as well. Dennis still has not received Bill's letter of resignation. Another member leaving the Commission is Brian Winn. Brian submitted his resignation due to him leaving the area. There will be 3 openings available. We will begin advertising and hopefully have the new members on board for the January meeting.

The Commission decided to change next month's meeting to January 29th due to the Idaho Horticulture Expo in Boise the week before during our regular scheduled meeting.

Brian suggested inviting the Chairman of the County Tree Board to the January meeting to discuss the Arbor Day Parade.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59am.

The next meeting of the Tree Commission will be held **Friday, January 29th, 2010** at **11:00 am** in the **City of Twin Falls Council Chambers, located at 305 3rd Ave E.**

Christi Green

Christi Green
Administrative Assistant
Parks and Recreation