

Council reviews issues with city trees

Written by Chris Lee

City council members boned up on their tree knowledge after a short presentation from Extension Agent Linda Langelo at their Tuesday, May 18 meeting.

Langelo presented council members with a slide show of photos she took of different trees and shrubs around Holyoke during her tree assessment.

Code Enforcement Officer Dawn Worley had some areas she was concerned about and had Langelo look at those areas first. Photos she presented to council members were of trees growing into power lines, over streets or were dying, as well as shrubs planted too close to the street.

She gave examples of intersections where shrubs were planted too close to the street, making it difficult for vehicles approaching the intersection to see oncoming traffic.

Trees growing up into power lines was another area Langelo hit on. She said she was stunned by how many there are around town. She added, those trees don't concern her as much unless a tree is in poor health and is in danger of breaking off into a power line.

There were also some trees she looked at that were infected with borers. She explained borers look for open wounds on trees, and she found some around town that were pushing out fresh saw dust.

Langelo said she is about 60 percent finished looking at trees around town. She is finished with the east side and has some left on the west side. She also has not been to the golf course.

Langelo said people may contact her to help decide what trees or shrubs to plant in different places on someone's property to ensure they won't interfere with power lines or streets in the future when they get bigger.

Langelo also pointed out many of the trees around town are behind in budding.

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Mayor David Nygaard thanked Langelo for her effort and dedication to the project.

Dog licensing discussed

Council members discussed dog licensing at their Tuesday meeting. Worley proposed discussing a fine schedule for dogs that aren't licensed.

Police Chief Phil Biersdorfer said they have a fine schedule for dogs at large and it seems to be working. Worley suggested a fine schedule of \$35, \$65 followed by a mandatory court appearance. A warning will be issued upon a first offense followed by the proposed fine schedule.

Council members agreed the goal is to get people to comply with the ordinance. Nygaard questioned if they were seeing compliance by just the warnings Worley has given so far. Biersdorfer said he didn't know for sure, but as in other cases, there are always people who do and those who don't.

Nygaard suggested and the council agreed, pushing the enforcement aspect to let the court decide. This way the ordinance wouldn't need to be visited.

Recreation in Holyoke outlined

Ray Bailey presented a short slide show to the council outlining the different recreational activities Holyoke offers.

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Bailey researched how many people use the different things around town, such as the pool, golf course, ball park and other things. He looked into how much money per person each entity costs.

It was found the golf course per user amount was a lot less than the ball park or swimming pool. However, the swimming pool and ball park receive money from Conservation Trust as well as GOCO money. For years a one percent city tax has also gone to the pool. The golf course does not receive conservation trust nor GOCO money.

The idea behind the presentation was to have the council think about reevaluating each entity from a cost analysis perspective.

Reports of city officials

Supt. Mark Brown reported citywide cleanup was successful, however things crews picked up were down about a third compared to the past.

Brown also noted there will be another citywide power outage sometime in June after repairs are finished on the Holyoke substation.

Police Chief Biersdorfer reported HPD hopes to participate in another Click It or Ticket program May 24-26. He also said there were no major incidents during the Cinco de Mayo celebration held at Phillips County Event Center.

Mayor Nygaard commended the chief on the preparation the department put into the event.

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Other business

In other business May 18, council members:

—adopted ordinance amending Title 15 of the Holyoke Municipal Code referring to the abatement of dangerous buildings.

—approved liquor license renewal for KarDale's.

—hired and set wages for Evan Swanson, Michal Brown, Morgan Eurich and Mitch Wittman.

—accepted request from the county to waive fees on permits for work scheduled on the courthouse steps and sidewalk, as well as a sprinkler system at Phillips County Event Center.

—approved HPD to participate in Click It or Ticket program.