



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 18, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Dave Perrault, City Administrator

FROM: Danica Mooney-Jones, Minnesota GreenCorps Member
Mike Mroska, Community Development Manager/City Planner

SUBJECT: Spring Tree Sale/Giveaway

Budgeted Amount:	Actual Amount:	Funding Source:
TBD	TBD	TBD

For Council Consideration

The City Council should consider giving direction on a tree seedling sale in the spring of 2020.

Tree Sale Background

At the October 28, 2019 City Council meeting, Councilmember Holmes requested staff to inquire about the DNR tree sapling program in regards to hosting a spring tree giveaway to Arden Hills residents. The DNR through the Minnesota State Forest Nursery sells tree seedlings (1-2 feet tall) in bulk at low cost. However, there is a minimum purchase of 500 trees as these are intended for mass reforestation plantings on a single property and Minnesota State law prohibits the redistribution of the trees by the City to residents.

Staff found that the City previously collaborated with Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County as they host an annual tree sale. Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that formed to promote the public support and appreciation of regional parks and trails. The program provides the residents of Arden Hills the opportunity to purchase shrubs and 4-6-foot-tall saplings. Friends of the Parks and Trails organizes and operates the tree sale. The City does not participate financially in the sale. Unfortunately, Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County annual tree sale is postponed for this year this as they are reorganizing. They are anticipating to host a tree sale in 2021.

Staff reviewed adjacent communities that also host tree sales. The majority of cities primarily sell 4-6-foot-tall saplings by 3 different methods: Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County, Tree Trust (another organization which runs tree sales for cities), or purchasing from a wholesale retailer like Gerten's or Bachmann's [as shown in the table below].

Tree Sale	Participating Cities
Friends of Parks and Trails	Arden Hills, St. Paul, and New Brighton
Tree Trust	Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, and Maplewood
Wholesale (like Gerten's or Bachman's)	Shoreview, Burnsville, and Blaine

Tree Trust charges the city \$30 per tree and the resident \$100. The cost of the tree for the resident can be offset if the City selects to contribute more than the minimum of \$30 dollars per tree. The wholesalers allow residents to buy trees through the city. The residents notify the city of what trees they want to purchase and pay the City directly. The City is then responsible for purchasing and distributing the trees from the wholesaler.

Another option is to purchase seedlings (1-2-foot-tall) from a nearby soil and water conservation districts. The Anoka County Conservation District sells seedlings in batches of 10 and 25 while the Washington County Conservation District sells only in batches of 25. These would be picked up by staff in late April and could then be sold or given away to Arden Hills residents. A Nursery Stock Dealer Certificate from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture would be needed for any tree sale held by the City. This \$225 certificate is required to sell or distribute nursery stock in Minnesota.

Tree Sale Summary:

Comparison of the Conservation District Tree Sale Options:

	Cost to City (\$)	Pros	Cons
Anoka County Conservation District	\$225 Nursery Stock Dealer Cert. + \$33 for 25 (\$1.32 per tree) or \$18.50 for 10 (\$1.85 per tree) seedlings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive for residents • More stock and choices available • Can buy in smaller bundles of 10 or 25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedlings will take a long time to establish
Washington County Conservation District	\$225 Nursery Stock Dealer Cert. + \$35 for 25 seedlings (\$1.40 per tree)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive for residents • Can buy in small bundles of 25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedlings will take a long time to establish • Going out of stock faster • Less choices

Tree Sale Discussion:

1. Is Council interested in offering a city-wide tree sale Spring 2020?
 - a. If yes, would the Council like to pursue the Anoka Conservation District or Washington Conservation District option?
 - b. Do we want to sell or giveaway the trees?
 - c. When and where should this sale take place? (the sale/giveaway would occur around Arbor day)

Budget Impact

Currently not budgeted for 2020, pending council decision.

Attachments

N/A