

ORDINANCE #2024 - 12

**AMENDING CHAPTER 2-224. 21 THROUGH 2-224.23 AND CHAPTER 18 - 19
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO HEIGHTS' CODE OF ORDINANCES REGULATING
THE CITY "BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE" AND "FORESTRY"**

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago Heights, Cook County, Illinois (the "*City*") is a home rule municipality pursuant to Section 6(a), Article VII of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois, and as such, may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs (the "*Home Rule Powers*"); and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the corporate authorities to update the City Code from time to time to promote efficiency, transparency and clarity in the City's day to day operation; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Chicago Heights, Cook County, Illinois, by and through its Home Rule Powers, as follows:

Section 1.

That the above recitals and legislative findings are found to be true and correct and are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof, as if fully set forth in their entirety.

Section 2.

Chapter 2, Division 7, and specifically Sections 224.21 through Section 224.3 of the City of Chicago Heights Code of Ordinances, entitled "Boards and Committees - "Beautification Advisory Committee"; are hereby deleted in their entirety and said "Beautification Advisory Committee" is hereby abolished. The Beautification Advisory Committee shall hereinafter be administered under Chapter 18, "Forestry."

Section 3.

Chapter 18, Section 18 - 19 of the City of Chicago Heights Code of Ordinances, entitled "Beautification Committee" is hereby deleted in its entirety.

Section 4. Chapter 18-19 is hereby replaced with the italicized language set forth below:

Section 18 – 19 Tree Advisory Board.

1. Purpose.

To enhance the quality of life and the present and future health, safety, and welfare of all residents, to enhance property values, and to ensure proper planting and care of trees on public property, the Mayor and City Council herein delegates the authority and responsibility for managing public trees, creates a Tree Advisory Board, establishes practices governing the planting and care of trees on public property, and makes provision for the emergency removal of trees on private property under certain conditions.

2. Definitions.

As used in this Article, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings indicated:

Damage – *any injury to or destruction of a tree, including but not limited to: uprooting; severance of all or part of the root system or main trunk; storage of material on or compaction of surrounding soil; a substantial change in the natural grade above a root system or around a trunk; surrounding the tree with impervious paving materials; or any trauma caused by accident or collision.*

Nuisance – *any tree, or limb thereof, that has an infectious disease or insect; is dead or dying; obstructs the view of traffic signs or the free passage of pedestrians or vehicles; or threatens public health, safety, and welfare.*

Parkway – *the area along a public street between the curb and the sidewalk; or if there is no curb or sidewalk, the unpaved portion of the area between the street right-of-way line and the paved portion of the street or alley.*

Public property – *all grounds and rights-of-way (ROWs) owned or maintained by the City.*

Public tree – *any tree or woody vegetation on city-owned or city-maintained property or rights-of-way.*

Top or Topping – *the non-standard practice of cutting back of limbs to stubs within a tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree.*

Section 5. Authority and Power.

- (a) **Delegation of authority and responsibility.** The Director of the Public Works and/or their designee, hereinafter referred to as the “Director”, shall have full authority and responsibility to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees and woody plants growing in or upon all municipal streets, rights-of-ways, city parks, and other public property. This shall include the removal of trees that may threaten electrical, telephone, gas, or any municipal water or sewer line, or any tree that is affected by fungus, insect, or other pest disease.
- (b) **Coordination among city departments.** All city departments will coordinate as necessary with the Director and will provide services as required to ensure compliance with this Ordinance as it relates to streets, alleys, rights-of-way, drainage, easements, and other public properties not under direct jurisdiction of the Director.
- (c) **Interference.** No person shall hinder, prevent, delay, or interfere with the Director or his agents while engaged in carrying out the execution or enforcement of this Ordinance.

Section 6. Tree Advisory Board. The City Council hereby creates a “Tree Advisory Board,” hereinafter referred to as the “Board.”

(a) **Duties.** The Board shall act in an advisory capacity to the Director and shall:

- (1) Coordinate and promote Arbor Day activities;
- (2) Review and update a five-year plan to plant and maintain trees on city property;
- (3) Support public awareness and education programs relating to trees;
- (4) Review city department concerns relating to tree care;
- (5) Submit an annual report of its activities to the Mayor and city council;
- (6) Assist with the annual application to renew the Tree City USA designation;
- (7) Recommend a list of tree species for planting on city property, and a list of prohibited species; and

(b) **Membership.** The Board shall consist of seven members appointed by the Mayor and include the Chief of Staff, Director of Public Works, the consulting arborist, and the remaining board positions filled by appointment. Advisory Members of the Board will serve without compensation. The current public Board members are: Margaret Burns-Westmeyer, Billie Davis and Susan Paus.

(c) **Term of Office.** Board members shall be appointed and serve at the discretion of the Mayor. If a vacancy shall occur during the term of any member, a successor shall be appointed by the Mayor.

(d) **Officers.** The Board shall annually select one of the members to serve as chair, may appoint a second member to serve as vice-chair, and may appoint a third member to serve as secretary.

(e) Meetings. The Board shall meet a minimum of four times each year. All meetings shall be open to the public. The Board chair may schedule additional meetings as needed.

Section 7. Tree Planting and Care Standards.

(a) Standards. All planting and maintenance of public trees shall conform to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) [A-300 "Standards for Tree Care Operations"](#) and shall follow all tree care [Best Management Practices \(BMPs\)](#) published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

(b) Requirements of franchise utility companies. The maintenance of public trees for utility clearance shall conform to all applicable utility industry standards.

(c) Preferred species list. The Director shall maintain an official list of desirable tree species for planting on public property in two size classes: Ornamental (20 feet or less in height at maturity) and Shade (greater than 20 feet at maturity). Trees from this approved list may be planted without special permission; other species may be planted with written approval from the Director.

(d) Planting distances. The Director shall develop and maintain an official set of spacing requirements for the planting of trees on public property. No tree may be planted within the visibility triangle of a street intersection or within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.

(e) Planting trees under electric utility lines. Only trees listed as Ornamental trees on the official city tree species list may be planted under or within 15 lateral feet of any overhead utility wire.

Section 8. Prohibition against harming public trees.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to damage, remove, or cause the damage or removal of a tree on public property without written permission from the Director.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to attach any cable, wire, sign, or any other object to any street, park, or public tree.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to “top” any public tree. Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes, where best pruning practices are impractical may be exempted from this provision at the determination of the Director.

(d) Any person, firm, corporation, or city department performing construction near any public tree(s) shall consult with the Director and shall employ appropriate measures to protect the tree(s), according to procedures contained in the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for *“Managing Trees During Construction”* published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

(e) Each violation of this section as determined and notified by the Director shall constitute a separate violation, punishable by fines and penalties under Section 10, in addition to mitigation values placed on the tree(s) removed or damaged in violation of this section.

Section 9. Adjacent Owner Responsibility.

(a) The owner of land adjacent to any city street or highway, when acting within the provisions of this Ordinance, may plant and maintain trees in the adjacent parkway area.

(b) No property owner shall allow a tree, or other plant growing on his or her property to obstruct or interfere with pedestrians or the view of drivers, thereby creating a hazard. If an obstruction persists, the Director shall notify the property owner to prune or remove the tree or plant. If the owner fails to comply with the notice, the City may undertake the necessary work and charge the cost to the property owner.

Section 10. Certain Trees Declared a Nuisance.

(a) Any tree, or limb thereof, on private property determined by the Director to have contracted a lethal, communicable disease or insect; to be dead or dying; to obstruct the view of traffic signs or the free passage of pedestrians or vehicles; or that threatens public health, safety, and welfare is declared a nuisance and the City may require its treatment or removal.

(b) Private property owners have the duty, at their own expense, to remove or treat nuisance trees on their property. The City may remove such trees at the owner's expense if the owner does not comply with treatment and/or removal as specified by the Director within the written notification period.

Section 11. Violations and Penalty. Any person, firm or corporation violating any provision of this Ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$750.00) for each offense.

Section 12. Appeals. Appeals to decisions by the Director or the Tree Advisory Board, or to penalties imposed after violations of this ordinance, shall be heard by Chief of Staff.”

Section 13. This Ordinance, and its parts, are declared to be severable and any section, clause, provision, or portion of this Ordinance declared invalid, the invalidity thereof shall not affect the validity of any other provision of this Ordinance which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 14. If any part of this Ordinance is found to be in conflict with any other ordinance, resolution, motion or order or parts thereof, the most restrictive or highest standard shall prevail.

Section 15. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon its passage, approval and publication as may be required by law.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Chicago Heights, Cook County, Illinois this 5th day of June 2024.

APPROVED:

Mayor David A. Gonzalez

Date

AYES: _____

NAYES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rachel Vega