

**MINUTES**  
**CITY-COUNTY COMMON MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2011**

**Present:** Gene Carroll, Chair; Deb Schorr, Vice Chair; Jon Camp; Doug Emery; Adam Hornung; Bernie Heier; Larry Hudkins; Jane Raybould

Brent Meyer, Weed Authority Superintendent; Russ Shultz, Former Weed Authority Superintendent

Chair Carroll opened the meeting at 8:15 a.m. and announced the location of the Open Meetings Law.

**1. Approval of Common Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2010.**

Heier made motion to approve the Common Meeting minutes of December 7, 2010, seconded by Emery. Members voting aye: Carroll, Schorr, Camp, Emery, Hornung, Heier, Hudkins. Abstaining: Raybould. Approved 7-1

**2. Election of Officers fo 2011**

Heier nominated Schorr for Chair, seconded by Hudkins. No other nominations or discussion. Role with members voting aye: Carroll, Schorr, Camp, Emery, Hornung, Heier, Hudkins, Raybould. Approved 8-0

Emery nominated Hornung for Vice Chair, seconded by Hudkins. No other nominations or discussion. Role with members voting aye: Carroll, Schorr, Camp, Emery, Hornung, Heier, Hudkins, Raybould. Approved 8-0

Chair Schorr presided for the rest of the meeting.

**3. City-County Common Meeting Dates for 2011**

Schorr stated per the list the meetings will be held monthly on alternate Mondays/Tuesdays. She stated Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, should be corrected to August 1<sup>st</sup>. The budget meeting listed is July 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

Heier made motion to approve the corrected dates, seconded by Hornung. Members voting aye: Schorr, Carroll, Camp, Emery, Hornung, Heier, Hudkins, Raybould. Approved 8-0

**4. Weed Control Authority 2010 Annual Report and Recommendations - Brent Meyer**

Meyer stated this is the 2010 Annual Report and Recommendations from the Combined County City Weed Control Program, and is Superintendent Shultz's last report, and he was kind enough to come today.

Meyer said it is impressive the work done with our staff. In the City Weed Program we did 4,887 inspections, on 2345 sites, slightly over 2 inspections per site. On weed abatement did 1980 inspections, 365 noxious weed inspections. Had 1660 weed abatement violations with 318 on noxious weeds. Owners controlled 1465 of weed abatement, 247 of noxious weed. Weed Authority controlled 189 on weed abatement, 2 on noxious weed.

Meyer stated they found noxious weeds infestations at 318 sites on 343 acres. Not huge infestations within the city. Did 543 inspections with approximately 95% of infestations controlled. A large project was treating over 70 acres at the city landfills.

The disturbing news is 58 infestations of phragmites are within the city. Some sites sprayed, but touchy as there are lots of flowers, with only chemical control working on phragmites.

Meyer stated Japanese Knotweed declared a Nebraska noxious weed on February 1<sup>st</sup>. When Japanese Knotweed and Giant Knotweed combine they become Bohemian Knotweed. In Lincoln/Lancaster County we have Japanese Knotweed, which spreads, produces seed, but not as rapidly as Bohemian Knotweed. A downside is Japanese Knotweed produces pollen for the Bohemian and Giant Knotweed. Next year will say where it has been eliminated in the city. Japanese Knotweed is one of the first plants put on the noxious weed list.

Shultz added one item is ornamental cultivars, found in city parks, and at the University. The Pink Fleece Flower is in gardens and on the University, and was sold as not producing with other Knotweed, but not true. The sale of these plants has been stopped.

Hudkins asked if they discussed with Parks and Rec? Shultz replied they have and measures will be taken. Meyer added the plant has an extensive root system and will take time and effort to eliminate.

Meyer stated with the proposed 2011 inspection season one problem is Musk thistle, heavily found on railroad right of way. Worked with Burlington Northern for them to do better on their right of ways, and if they don't will force control. The railroad tries but they abut numerous properties. Meyer then listed the plants on the projected 2011 planned inspections for weed abatement and noxious weeds.

Meyer said recommendations include coordination. Have attended PRT meetings, working with agencies who have problem properties. Our maps are shared and if we could look at other maps everyone would know what each departments is doing. He commented state-wide they're developing a mapping system with everyone on the same page. Shultz added they'll work with I.T. as departments have data bases and if we shared information could check and see if a property is being observed by another agency.

Carroll commented he's Chairman of the Information Services Committee. At this Thursday's meeting will discuss sharing data bases. Meyer added he's also met with I.S., as the data base is old, but this year should go with the Microsoft program, where everyone is compatible.

Camp asked on the 2011 Planned Inspections, is there an experience or a rule on the weed abatement category, on noxious weed, resulting in possibly 2.5 inspections per site? Shultz replied they figure approximately 2.5 inspections per site, but if forced control have to reinspect. Last year the inspection contractor took pictures so we didn't send a second person. These are taken before and after.

Hudkins asked on sharing information with agencies, specifically what is needed from this Board? Shultz answered they would offer their data base to agencies if vice versa. Hudkins asked if in recent years the majority of calls are from the city or county? Shultz replied they have a good grip on problems, receiving less than 100 noxious weeds complaints county-wide. A regional review shows a 87% noxious weed county reduction over 20 years. Meyer added less county infestations but they take longer as they are larger parcels to walk through.

Heier asked on the railroad right of way if bought and sprayed who pays? Meyer replied they pay. In the county if they don't we put on our tax. Hudkins asked if they don't pay is it assessed to their taxes? Some property isn't valuable so they let the county take care of it. Shultz replied we have one in town with no one paying.

Meyer stated the second recommendation is the change in weed abatement rules. Now some city parks do not mow all their property and allowed to have grass grow in wide spread areas. Yet abatement rules require homeowners to mow their large grassy areas. The suggestion would be on large grassy areas, as long as they're kept weed free to allow mowing back so far from streets, or neighboring properties, and have as a natural grass area. Our department should decide. Not a uniform policy as we let the parks do, but not private individuals.

Shultz stated it really is a health related ordinance, but most people look at aesthetically, with numerous opinions on what's aesthetic. His opinion is with large grassy areas, not weedy, aesthetic to the neighbors, are not offensive if cut back 50 feet. Also would be easier for inspectors.

Schorr questioned how the City change could occur. Carroll replied they would have to change the ordinance monitoring mowing, including parks. Meyer added people would realize they have to mow in the fall. Shultz stated he discussed with the City Attorney and could do follow up, and bring back to this Board.

Meyer stated the third recommendation is providing for posting of sites. Now do through the mail, and if not received we publish. Would require state legislation to be able to post due notifications in cases of unclear ownership but would be beneficial for several City departments.

Carroll thought to do at the site and on the web. Meyer stated they do post on their site with title companies being able to research if properties are posted.

**MOTION:**

Hudkins made motion to support Internet and Property posting and have Weed Control pursue legislatively. Seconded by Heier. Role with members voting aye: Schorr, Hornung, Carroll, Camp, Emery, Heier, Hudkins, and Raybould. Passed 8-0

Meyer explained the 2010 Noxious Weeds map.

Meyer stated when sending out future reports will have a question and answer section, to help educate on Nebraska's weed laws and to understand some issues the Weed Authority faces. He commented favorably on his staff having good experience, with Shultz under contract. Also, old sheriff cars are used by the Weed Authority, including a 1989 pickup.

Meyer reiterated his thanks to Russ Shultz who served 20 years as the Weeds Authority superintendent.

Chair Schorr adjourned the meeting at 8:50 a.m.