

City of Urbana, Illinois

Minutes of the Urbana Tree Commission Meeting
Public Works Engineering Conference Room
706 S. Glover Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802

Wednesday, December 3, 2014
1:30 p.m.

Members Present: Carol Augspurger, Stewart Berlocher, Jeff Dawson, Thom Fehrmann, Derek Liebert, Michael Stevenson

Members Absent: Barbara Anderson, Darin Eastburn

Staff Present: Michael Brunk, City of Urbana Arborist

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from September 3, 2014 were presented for approval. Fehrmann moved to approve the minutes; Liebert seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Public Input

Dennis Roberts spoke in support of the efforts of the Tree Commission and in support of the Legacy Tree program.

Former Business

a. 312 S. Coler Hackberry Update

Brunk presented some products that had been made by the CU Woodshop and an independent wood turner using the Sim Hackberry wood. He said he hoped to have the trunk of the tree taken down in the coming winter months, and that he had received an offer from a local sawyer to mill and dry the trunk in return for 50 percent of the wood. He said once the wood is dried, City staff could solicit requests for proposals from artists if funding could be raised or made available for these projects. Commission members discussed several options for use of the wood, including selling it, making a table and/or a bench from it, cutting cookies from it, making plaques from it, and donating it to interested community members.

Brunk also discussed whether or not to leave the four-foot stump that would remain after the trunk was cut. He said this would save costs and allow the public to enjoy viewing and studying the stump.

New Business

a. 309 High Street Sycamore Legacy Tree Nomination

Brunk showed the Commission a stand that would be placed in the right-of-way next to Legacy Trees. He discussed information about each tree that could be included on the stand, including the use of QR codes which could direct users to a story about the tree. He said each stand costs approximately \$350, but that cost could be reduced by ordering the stands in higher quantities. He said he hoped to secure donors to cover the cost of the stands.

The Commission reviewed a legacy tree nomination for a City sycamore tree at 309 W. High Street (see attached). Discussion ensued regarding some minor hazards that would need to be abated. After discussion, Dawson moved to recommend approval of the tree to City council based on its size. Liebert seconded, and the motion carried.

Brunk said he had the names of three people who were interested in getting involved with the Legacy Tree program. He said that he would like to see the program get more publicity, and that he would like those volunteers use their time to raise money for the program. Dawson recommended having the Master Naturalists program write some promotional material as part of their volunteer work.

b. Contractor Removal List

Brunk distributed a list of 62 trees to be quoted for removal by a contractor. He said he would prioritize the highest hazards, and that budget constraints would necessitate that a percentage of trees on the list would have to be removed by City staff or not be removed until the next fiscal year. Brunk said that City arbor crews had been performing reduction pruning on several of the lower hazard trees to reduce the time commitment involved in removal, and that he planned to request an increased budget for removals next fiscal year. Discussion ensued regarding the types of trees that appeared on the list.

Commission members also discussed the City's plans for ash trees which were or which could be affected by the emerald ash borer. Brunk said there were only 6 ash trees on the current removal list, and that the City still had 400 ash trees in its inventory. He said staff could handle the removal of approximately 75 of those trees, illustrating the need for additional funding.

c. 2015 Meeting Dates

The Commission agreed to continue meeting on the first Wednesdays of March, September, and December at 1:30 p.m.

d. Tree Commission Bylaws

Fletcher-Washington distributed a draft of proposed Tree Commission bylaws on public input. After the Commission reviewed this draft, Stevenson moved to approve the bylaws as written. Berlocher seconded, and the motion carried.

At this time, Augspurger inquired whether there was any staff dedicated to the procurement of endowments for programs such as the Legacy Tree program. Brunk said there was no staff position for this, but that staff was working with the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois to establish a foundation that is facilitated through that entity.

At this time, Berlocher asked for clarification on Open Meetings Act regulations regarding email communications.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Femi Fletcher, Recording Secretary
Urbana Tree Commission